

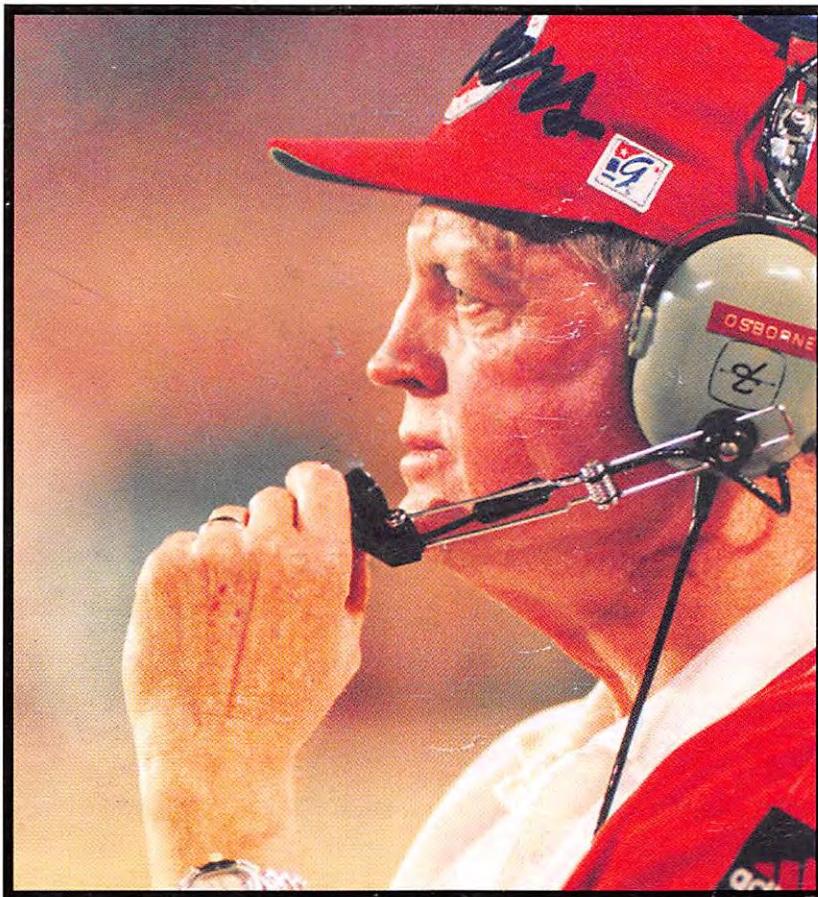
1997 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SPECIAL

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Huskers Illustrated

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**NEBRASKA SENDS TOM OSBORNE
OUT A WINNER WITH THIRD NATIONAL TITLE
AND 42-17 WIN OVER TENNESSEE IN 1998 ORANGE BOWL**



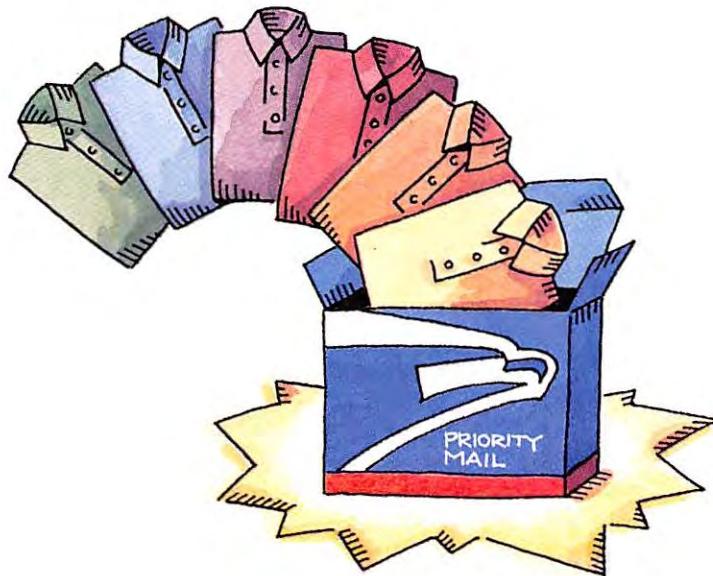
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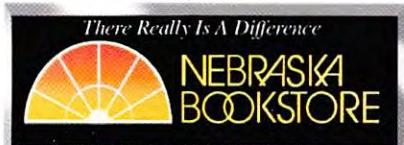
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CONTENTS

1997 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP SPECIAL Volume 18, No. 2

FEATURES

20 A Call For Piece (Of The Title)

Arguments were made and votes were swayed. In the end, Nebraska had the trophy it coveted.
By Mike Babcock

32 Crystal Clear

Nebraska won its third national title in four years, leaving little doubt which team has been the most dominant in the '90s.

44 Greener Pastures

Ahman Green leaves the fields of Nebraska a year early to pursue his dream of playing in the NFL.

46 Best And Worst Of '97

Only Tom Osborne's sudden, but somewhat expected, retirement tainted what would have been a flawless championship year for his 25th team.

54 Little Big Man

Undeterred by his diminutive size, Frank Solich earned the respect of Husker fans as a player, and is poised to do the same as the new head coach.
By Mike Babcock

60 Season In Review

A look at the close calls (Missouri and Colorado), blowouts (Texas Tech and Oklahoma) and every game in between that led Nebraska to an undefeated season and Orange Bowl berth.

DEPARTMENTS

Letters	6
NU Notebook	9
The Jet's Retrospective	14
Adrian's Analysis	15
State Of The Huskers	16
Orange Bowl Statistics	42
Women's Hoops	82
Men's Hoops	84
Grid Recruiting	86
Final Word	92

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue (football recruiting recap) will mail Feb. 20, 1998.

ON THE COVER

Tom Osborne (Scott Smith)

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Scott Frost and Ahman Green take a good look at the Sears Trophy, given to the winner of the USA Today/ESPN Top 25 Coaches' Poll, on Media Day prior to the 1998 Orange Bowl.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please send your comments and questions to Letters, P.O. Box 83222, Lincoln, Neb. 68501-3222. Or fax them to us at (972) 851-1720. We reserve the right to edit the letters for clarity, content and length. For those with electronic mail abilities, huskersedit@xcscx.com.

I just wanted to say that the 25 years of hard work Tom Osborne gave to the people in the state of Nebraska was greatly appreciated by myself and the rest of my family. The winning and national championships have made it fun to be a Husker football supporter throughout the years.

Most importantly, though, is the impact Osborne had on people's lives. My brother (Jim Prevette) is one of those people that he affected in a very positive way. I remember him starting out as a walkon for the Huskers and talking about playing pro football maybe someday. My brother was never a starter, but he grew up within the program and I remember him telling me one day that he felt good "to just be on the scout team so that he could get the other players ready for the games." I knew then that Jim had matured to accept his level of ability and his role within the team.

Coach Osborne, you are truly a great man for having affected so many people in such a positive way. You are gracious in attributing these results to others but we know that the personality of the entire program at Nebraska is just an extension of your own. I wish you all the best as you get down to serious business in the fourth quarter of life.

John Prevette
jprevette@webzone.net

As a life-long die-hard Husker fan, I have watched in dismay the criticism of Scott Frost. It is disheartening to see the best fans in college football be so hard on a hometown kid. Regardless of where he started his career, he has come home and performed awesome. I bet that most of you don't know that going into the Fiesta Bowl against Florida, Heisman Trophy runner-up Tommie Frazier had only 604 yards rushing on the season. Frost had over 1,000 before suiting up for the Big 12 Championship Game.

I would love to just shake his hand and say, "Job well done." As a foot-

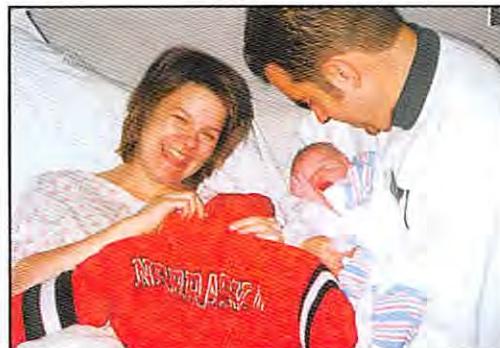
ball player at a Division I-AA school, I understand your value to the University of Nebraska football team.

Aaron R. Deifel
aerdeifel@ups.edu

Dec. 10, 1997, was a day of both my ultimate high and lowest of lows. My first grandson, Caleb James, was born at 8:13 a.m. (He got his first Huskers jacket before he was two hours old).

At 3:30 p.m. my sister from Omaha called me and broke the news of Tom Osborne's retirement. The news put a damper on a great day. However, after much thought, I am very happy for Tom and his family, and hope that they may now enjoy their new time with the man who has given so much to the fans of college football.

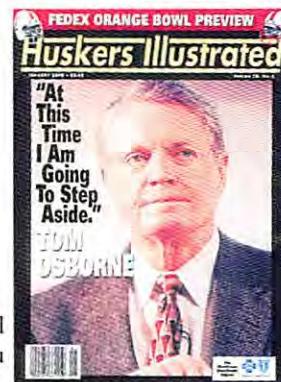
Jim Gomez
Broken Arrow, Okla.



The Huskers gained another supporter with the Dec. 10, 1997, birth of Caleb James.

Jack Arute said, "(Ahman) Green wasn't being recognized because he played for the Huskers." Why is that so? Are we so far on the top that the sports people need to tear us down? Before the Big 12 Championship Game, he had well over 300 yards more than Penn State's Curtis Enis. Still, Green wasn't named All-America.

During the 1995 season, Todd Philpers for the *The Denver Post* said the Huskers didn't need Lawrence Phillips because of two words: "Ahman Green." However, the



Huskers need Green not for yards, but for the greatness of his character. The validity of the All-America team has hit rock bottom.

Pat Lane
Carl@uwyo.edu
Laramie, Wyo.

The Northern California for Nebraska thoughts have been with

all Nebraska and college football fans since the announced retirement of Tom Osborne. Although we are all saddened and dejected, we support Tom's decision, knowing the priority of his health and family. We could just thank Dr. Tom for making the football team consistent winners, however. Nebraska fans expect that.

Coach Osborne's critics failed to understand his coaching philosophy in commitment to character development. Many times, this placed his spiritual and moral values ahead of football in an attempt to develop mature and responsible players. Sometimes, this gave players another chance.

May God bless Tom Osborne in his retirement, and we thank him for the memories. We continue to support new head coach Frank Solich and the football program.

Walter E. Reiss, M.D.
Lodi, Calif.

Whoa, Nellie! I almost drove my red Ford Probe off the road when I heard that Tom Osborne had decided to hang it up as the head coach at the University of Nebraska. This is big. It's like Betty Crocker giving up sweets, (ESPN anchor) Chris Berman giving up nicknames or Boris Yeltsin giving up vodka. It just isn't supposed to happen.

For 25 years, Tom Osborne has been at the helm of Nebraska football. He has been described as quiet, unassuming, boring, bland, etc. The only thing that he has never been called is a loser. Osborne has won at least nine games a season for 25 straight years. In baseball teams, that would be like winning 95 games a year. People think the Atlanta Braves have done well in the '90s. Imagine if they keep up their pace for 20 more years.

Admit it, you always have wondered how this frail, quiet, librarian-looking guy could shred the likes of Florida, Washington, Colorado, Miami and UCLA for all these years. Only he knows the secret and he's not telling.

He came in quietly, and his teams roared mightily.

The crowds always chant, "Go Big Red." Funny, I always thought that they were referring to the football team. Little did I know that they were actually cheering for the red-headed coach from Kearney, Neb.

Craig P. Fagan
San Diego, Calif.

In three out of the past four years, the Michigan Wolverines have lost four games. In three out of the last four years, the Nebraska Cornhuskers have been crowned national champions. In the past five years, Nebraska has lost all of three games. Only John Wooden's UCLA Bruins have sustained similar success over such an extended period. And had a last-second kick not sailed wide left in the 1994 Orange Bowl, then the Huskers would have added another championship to their overflowing trophy case.

Simply put, a little bit of jealousy has crept into the national scene and unfortunately for Nebraska's foes, the Huskers' reign might not end too soon.

Notre Dame has fallen by the way of the peso. Oklahoma allowed 72 points to Nebraska in 1996 and 69 in 1997 (hey, they are improving). USC has a new coach (Paul Hackett formerly of the Kansas City Chiefs) whose offense mustered all of 10 points in his last game as offensive coordinator. And for all of Florida State's success, it has managed to win but one national championship in Bobby Bowden's 400 years of service.

Tom Osborne's silver anniversary as the Cornhuskers' mastermind coincided with the golden days of Nebraska football. While all of the Husker faithful lament his retirement, I am sure the rest of the college football world is breathing a sigh of relief. I am sure there was a similar relief when Bob Devaney stepped down as NU's head coach after winning back-to-back titles in 1970 and 1971 and turned the reins over to Osborne.

Stuart E. Fagan
San Diego, Calif.

Congratulations! Not only to the Nebraska Cornhuskers, but also to *Huskers Illustrated*. The best magazine anywhere (covering the best team anywhere) got the most publicity after the game. That poster cover of Tom Osborne, claiming the Huskers are No. 1 (which they are) was great, and I saw it everywhere — ESPN, CNNSI, USA Today ... It's about time more people heard about your great magazine.

Clint Adams
Armstrong, Iowa

As far as I'm concerned, Michigan (and its fans) have no argument. Charles Woodson is a great player and he had a great year, and they had one big win when they went to Penn State and beat the Nittany Lions.

But they're complaining that they deserve the national championship because they played such a great schedule. Did they? The mighty Big 10 was 2-5 in bowl games — meaning Michigan beat a bunch of teams that were overhyped, just like they are every year.

Put Michigan and Nebraska on a neutral field, and the Huskers win nine out of 10 games.

Carlton Brown
Houston, Texas

Scott Frost should run for office. Not only did he do the job for "his people" (the Nebraska fans), but he also proved to be quite a politician after the game. I stayed up almost all night after the Huskers drilled Tennessee, watching every story I could find about the game, and there was Frost, politicking for the national championship.

He undoubtedly made some voters feel guilty for voting otherwise, challenging them with comments like, "If you watched the Orange Bowl and the Rose Bowl and honestly think Michigan would beat us, go ahead and vote for them." And he also took every opportunity to bring up Tom Osborne and the fact that the Orange Bowl was his last game as coach. If there were any voters watching who could be swayed by sentiment, Frost got them.

The Cornhuskers won the title based on their performance on the field. But Frost's performance in front of the microphones may have sealed it.

Ray Walker
Kearney, Neb.

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Season Saver

While freshman Matt Davison's miracle catch in Missouri wasn't the key to winning a national championship, it kept hope (and an unbeaten streak) alive



Scott Smith

MATT DAVISON was sitting pool-side at the Sheraton Bal Harbour on Miami Beach in the early morning hours of Jan. 3. The emotion of Nebraska's 42-17 victory against Tennessee in the Orange Bowl game made sleep all but impossible for him or the friends from "back home" keeping him company.

The news came in the form of a "big roar from the crowd inside," Davison said later that morning, as the

Cornhuskers prepared to board busses for the airport and the charter flight back to Lincoln.

"I was like: 'What happened? What happened?'"

"Everybody comes running outside. 'We're No. 1, baby!'"

The coaches in the USA Today/ESPN poll had voted Nebraska the national champion.

"It was definitely a fun time," the freshman split end from Tecumseh, Neb., said.

If not for Davison, the Cornhuskers wouldn't have had an opportunity to share the 1997 national title with Michigan, which was a relatively decisive No. 1 in the Associated Press writers poll.

Had he not kept playing until the whistle blew, Nebraska would have gone down to defeat at Missouri in the ninth game of the season. Cornhusker fans know the particulars of "The Catch."

It was after the Missouri game that the Cornhuskers dropped from No. 1 to No. 3, an adjustment in the rankings that led to doubt about their chances of sharing the national title.

But the Cornhuskers were confident going into the Orange Bowl game, according to Davison. "Actually, we

thought we would probably win the coaches' (championship)," he said. "I mean, I think we were pretty optimistic. Maybe that was because we wanted to believe we were going to win it."

"I'm not sure we were that confident we would."

Michigan's 21-16 victory against Washington State in the Rose Bowl the previous day left the Nebraska players "pretty quiet," Davison said. "It probably took a little air out of our sail for a while."

The Cornhuskers watched the Rose Bowl, hoping Washington State would pull off an upset.

Even though the upset didn't occur, "we realized that, hey, we can still do this thing," Davison said of the victory against No. 3 Tennessee. "That's another tribute to our team, you know, that we were able to pull off a big win like that after (having) maybe no hope or little hope of a national championship."

"Before the game, you could feel the intensity in the air, I think. It was one of those things where we were all focused. We felt like we were going to play a good game. We knew we were prepared."

"We knew Coach (Tom) Osborne had prepared us."

Davison caught one pass, for a 16-yard gain in the Orange Bowl game. He caught 11 passes, for one touchdown and a team-high 232 yards during the regular season.

That touchdown will be remembered the way Johnny Rodgers' punt return against Oklahoma in the "Game of the Century" is remembered — and represented the 1971 national championship.

The national title gives "The Catch" even greater significance.

"This is just a dream come true. It's a dream season, I guess," he said. ■

TOM OSBORNE TIMELINE

Jan. 2, 1973

Dynasty Begins
Osborne officially becomes Nebraska's head coach, replacing Bob Devaney after Cornhuskers' 40-6 victory against Notre Dame in 1973 Orange Bowl.



Sept. 8, 1973

First Victim, Please
Cornhuskers beat UCLA Bruins, 40-13, in Osborne's first game as head coach.

Oct. 13, 1973

Few And Far Between
Nebraska loses at Missouri, 13-12, in first of only 49 Husker losses under Osborne.

Jan. 1, 1974

Texas Toast
First bowl game also happened to be first bowl victory — a 19-3 win against Texas in Cotton Bowl.

Nov. 15, 1975

Dust Off The Trophy Case
Earns share of first Big Eight championship with 52-0 victory against Iowa State in Lincoln.

Nov. 11, 1978

An End To Sooner Magic
Coaches first victory against Barry Switzer and No. 1-ranked Oklahoma, 17-14 at Memorial Stadium.





Jon Waller

DARLINGTON TAKES A SICK DAY

GEORGE Darlington had just completed dinner and was sitting with friends at the Sheraton Bal Harbour when the results of the USA Today/ESPN poll were announced.

"All of a sudden a cheer erupted," he said.

His immediate reaction was that Tom Osborne had come down from his room. Such behavior would have been atypical, however. "It wasn't normal for Tom to come down," Darlington said.

That's when he knew the Cornhuskers had been voted national champions.

The days leading up to the Orange Bowl game were extremely difficult for Darlington, the only current NU assistant who was on Osborne's first staff in 1973. They were together from the beginning.

That uniquely personal pressure was intensified by the fact that Darlington coaches a group of young defensive backs, and "certainly, it's no secret that the matchup, the chances

Tennessee had to win the game revolved strictly around the (Volunteers') ability to throw and catch," he said.

"That doesn't mean they couldn't run it a little bit. But the bottom line is, they weren't going to win the game running the ball because nobody has against us in a long time. So from that standpoint, it was extremely stressful."

It was so stressful that Darlington missed practice on the Wednesday before the game.

His absence was significant. "I missed the first practice that I've ever missed, as a player or coach, in 30-some or 40 years," Darlington said. "I honestly could not get out of bed."

The diagnosis was that Darlington was sidelined by the flu. But "maybe stress was involved with that, too, a little bit," he said.

Darlington said he felt better the next day, and by game time he was fine, although a bit hungry.

But he didn't eat much of anything for about three days. ■

Tom Osborne Field?

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents will consider a resolution to name the football field at Memorial Stadium in honor of Tom Osborne. In fact, it appears to be only a formality.

Regent John Payne was among those on the field at Pro Player Stadium immediately after the Orange Bowl victory. "It's going to be Tom Osborne Field," he said. "I guarantee it." ■



SOUND BITE

"You don't end your career, normally, to get a few votes."



Tom Osborne, while addressing a question as to "possible" motives for his retirement

Dec. 5, 1978

Money Is Not Enough
Turns down \$100,000 offer to replace Bill Mallory as head coach at Colorado.



Oct. 13, 1981

Back To Stay
Cornhuskers return to AP Top 20, at No. 19, following 59-0 victory against Colorado at Memorial Stadium. Osborne's teams would never drop out of the Top 20 after that.

Aug. 29, 1983

Kickin' The Lions Good
Coaches 44-6 victory against Penn State in first Kickoff Classic at East Rutherford, N.J.



Sept. 24, 1983

At UCLA's Expense Again
Earns victory No. 100 as head coach, 42-10, against UCLA at Memorial Stadium.

Oct. 8, 1983

Passing The Mentor
A 14-10 win against Oklahoma State gives Osborne victory No. 102, surpassing Devaney to become the winningest football coach in school history.

Dec. 2, 1983

Double The Pleasure
"Double Hundred Celebration" honors Osborne and Devaney for being first major college football coaches at one school to post back-to-back 100 victories.



Big 12 Voters Got Their "ABC's" Out Of Order

GRADED OUT

Scott Frost earned **Tom Osborne**'s first-team vote as the All-Big 12 quarterback. Osborne probably didn't spend much time considering that vote, either. Frost reached 1,000 yards passing and rushing for the season in the Colorado game. The senior from Wood River, Neb., is only the 10th player in major college history to accomplish that. **Beau Morgan** did it twice for the Air Force Academy.

"They ask you to list what they call 'A' players and 'B' (players). 'A' is a guy you think is surefire, that caliber," Osborne said, explaining the voting process for the coaches' all-conference team.

"I'm not saying that he's better than somebody else. I don't know. I just felt that over the years, all the players we've had here, that he compares very well with the top quarterbacks we've had or that I've seen in the league. He was one I certainly listed as an 'A' player, in terms of what he contributed."

"But I don't want to get involved in a lot of controversy. People vote how they want to vote."

The consensus of the Big 12 coaches was that Frost was a "C" quarterback, behind Missouri's **Corby Jones**, the conference's "A" quarterback, and Kansas State's **Michael Bishop**, the "B."

Jones ranked second in the Big 12 in total offense, behind Colorado's John Hessler, and led Missouri to a 7-4 record. Bishop was fifth in total offense, for a 10-1 Kansas State team.

Both had outstanding seasons for successful teams. But then,

NCAA Division I-A 1,000/1,000 Club

PLAYER, SCHOOL, YEAR	RUSHING	PASSING
Scott Frost, Nebraska, 1997	1,095	1,237
Chris McCoy, Navy, 1997	1,370	1,203
Beau Morgan, Air Force, 1996	1,491	1,210
Beau Morgan, Air Force, 1995	1,285	1,165
Michael Carter, Hawaii, 1991	1,092	1,172
Brian Mitchell, SW Louisiana, 1989	1,311	1,966
Dee Dowis, Air Force, 1989	1,286	1,285
Darian Hagan, Colorado, 1989	1,004	1,002
Bart Weiss, Air Force, 1985	1,032	1,449
Reggie Collier, S. Mississippi, 1981	1,005	1,004
Johnny Bright, Drake, 1950	1,232	1,168

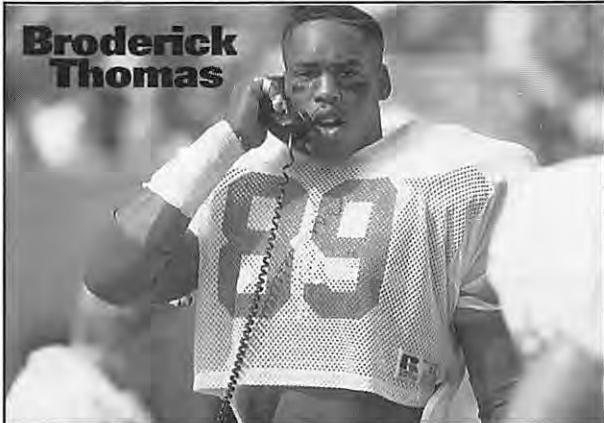
so did Frost, who a month later would lead his team to a national championship, in addition to becoming a member of the exclusive 1,000/1,000 Club.

Osborne said Frost has played as well this season as any quarterback in Cornhusker history. He said Frost belongs on Nebraska's short list, which includes **Jerry Tagge**, **Turner Gill** and **Tommie Frazier**.

"In terms of level of play, for this season, he's been there. That's where I rate him," Osborne said.

Tagge and Frazier earned All-America honors. Gill was first-team all-conference three times. ■

Broderick Thomas



Huskers Illustrated's All-Osborne era team includes Tommie Frazier at quarterback. Frazier's football career apparently is at an end. In mid-December, Frazier's agent, **Gregory Samms**, announced that Frazier no longer hopes to play at the professional level because of continuing health problems.

"Football isn't everything," Samms told The Associated Press.

The inclusion of Frazier as quarterback on an All-Osborne team is a no-brainer, though Scott Frost and **Turner Gill** certainly would deserve consideration.

The interior offensive line of such a team would include five Outland Trophy winners, headed up by two-time honoree

Dave Rimington. The others are: Aaron Taylor, Zach Wiegert, Will Shields and Dean Steinkuhler.

Junior Miller, like Frazier, would be a lock at tight end, with **Tim Smith** atop the list of split ends.

Frazier would be joined in the backfield by Heisman Trophy winner **Mike Rozier** at I-back, **Irving Fryar** at wingback and **Tom Rathman** at fullback.

Kris Brown, who has another season, would be the place-kicker.

An Osborne-era defense, limited to players he recruited, might include **Grant Wistrom**, **Jason Peter**, **Neil Smith** and **Jimmy Williams** up front; **Trev Alberts**, **Broderick Thomas** and **Steve Damkroger** as linebackers; and **Mike Minter**, **Bret Clark**, **Barron Miles** and **Dave Butterfield** in the secondary. **Mike Stigge** would be the punter. ■

All-Osborne Team

Jan. 2, 1984

Showing Guts In Miami
Elects to go for two-point conversion with 48 seconds remaining in 31-30 loss against Miami in Orange Bowl. Earns respect of national media for playing to win.



Feb. 5, 1985

A State Holds Its Breath
Double-bypass surgery lasts three hours with Dr. Deepak Gangahar as lead cardiovascular surgeon.

Feb. 6, 1992

Building A Champion
Announces scholarship recruiting class that includes quarterback Tommie Frazier, who will contribute to back-to-back national championships.



Oct. 7, 1993

Reaching The 200 Plateau
Coaches victory No. 200, with a 27-13 win against Oklahoma State at Stillwater.

Jan. 1, 1995

A 'Wait' Is Lifted
Gets first national championship with 24-17 victory against Miami in Orange Bowl.



Jan. 2, 1996

Two For Tom
Gets second national title with 62-24 victory against Florida in Fiesta Bowl.

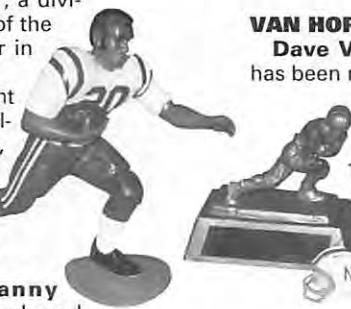
AROUND THE HORN

A "MINI" JET

Johnny Rodgers in miniature? Kenner, a division of Hasbro, Inc., has included a figure of the Cornhuskers' first Heisman Trophy winner in its "Heisman Collection." The recently released collection has eight other Heisman Trophy winners in their college uniforms: **Steve Owens**, Oklahoma, 1969; **Archie Griffin**, Ohio State, 1974-75; **Tony Dorsett**, Pittsburgh, 1976; **Doug Flutie**, Boston College, 1984; **Bo Jackson**, Auburn, 1985; **Barry Sanders**, Oklahoma State, 1988; **Eddie George**, Ohio State, 1995; and **Danny Wuerffel**, Florida, 1996. The figures are packaged with miniature replicas of the Heisman Trophy and have a suggested retail price of under \$10.

Kenner has been producing the sports figures since 1988. A few now sell for hundreds of dollars on the secondary market.

Rodgers said the "Heisman Collection" has been in the works for some time. His figure was produced from photographs from his personal collection. The result "looks OK," he said.



POLL POSITION

In an internet poll taken by ESPN's SportsZone, only 54 percent of the 36,069 who responded thought Nebraska would remain a top 10 power now that Osborne has retired. Nearly 40 percent (39.7) thought the Huskers would slip out of the top 10 and 6.3 percent predicted the bottom would fall out for the program next season and the team would fall out of the top 25.

OSBORNE'S RETIREMENT INFLUENCED BY DESIRE TO MAKE SOLICH NEW HEAD COACH

A key factor in **Tom Osborne**'s decision to step aside as head coach was the assurance that **Frank Solich** would be his successor.

The timing of Osborne's announcement enabled the university to act quickly on that count.

Because of factors related to recruiting, "we received approval to move ahead without going through the normal search-committee structure, full advertising of the opening and so forth," athletic director **Bill Byrne** told the *Omaha World-Herald*.

"We had to justify to the affirmative action office that we had to act expeditiously. I sent a letter to them, laying out the arguments."

He received assurances from Byrne, Chancellor **James Moeser** and the Board of Regents that Solich would be his successor.

Byrne and Moeser, whom Osborne had told before the season that it probably would be his last, tried to persuade him otherwise. Their response, he said, was: "We would appreciate it if you didn't quit, but if you have to, we understand."

"Van Horn is a great opportunity for me," Van Horn said. "It is an outstanding institution that is nationally recognized and I feel I would be able to take recruiting to a whole new level. There is unlimited potential for the Nebraska baseball program."

VAN HORN NAMED BASEBALL COACH

Dave Van Horn, former coach at Northwestern (La.) State, has been named the new Nebraska baseball coach.

Van Horn, who has been at NWS the past three seasons, compiled a 106-65 record and won two Southland Conference championships (1995 and 1997).

"Nebraska is a great opportunity for me," Van Horn said. "It is an outstanding institution that is nationally recognized and I feel I would be able to take recruiting to a whole new level. There is unlimited potential for the Nebraska baseball program."

"The Big 12 is one of the top baseball conferences in the country, and I look forward to the challenge of competing against the nation's best teams."

Van Horn, 37, replaces longtime NU coach **John Sanders**, who was fired in December. **Mike Anderson**, a four-year assistant, will remain with the program. The search for a pitching coach will begin immediately. The Huskers are scheduled to open the season Feb. 15 at the Metrodome against Minnesota.

MAKING THE GRADE

The demands on players are much greater now than when he was an assistant coach, and even when he was first a head coach, Osborne said.

"It takes an exceptional human being now to be all you're supposed to be as a student-athlete."

As usual, the Cornhuskers were well-represented on all-academic teams. Among the honorees were first-team GTE/CoSIDA Academic All-Americans **Grant Wistrom** and **Joel Makovicka**.

Wistrom has a 3.431 cumulative grade-point average in a pre-pharmacy major. Makovicka has a 3.84 GPA in biological sciences.

Scott Frost, **Jon Zatechka** and **Chad Kelsay** were second-team GTE/CoSIDA Academic All-Americans.

The Cornhuskers dominated the Academic All-Big 12 team, with 18 first-team selections. In addition, 17 received honorable mention.

MARCHING TO HIS OWN DRUM

Redshirted sophomore **Brandon Drum**, a defensive tackle, has been suspended from the team indefinitely, following an incident at a Lincoln bar in late December. He did not make the trip to Miami with the team.

"If the things that have been reported about him are accurate, then I think it would be difficult for him to return to the team," Osborne told the *Omaha World-Herald*, adding that the decision would depend on the reaction of teammates as well as "what the facts are." ■

Sept. 7, 1996

Spartans Add To Streak
Coaches 26th consecutive victory, a 55-14 win against Michigan State to open season in Lincoln.



Nov. 1, 1997

Averaging 10 Wins A Year
Earns victory No. 250, with a 69-7 win against Oklahoma. Also evens record against Sooners at 13-13.

Nov. 15, 1997

One Last Time
Prior to 77-14 victory against Iowa State, Osborne runs onto the field at Memorial Stadium for final time as head coach. He has cardiac episode late that night.

Dec. 10, 1997

"At This Time . . ."
Announces he will step aside as head coach after 25 seasons. Longtime assistant Frank Solich named successor.

Jan. 2, 1998

One Last Bowl
Coaches final game, a 42-17 victory against Tennessee in Orange Bowl.

Jan. 3, 1998

Going Out A Winner
Learns in early morning that coaches have voted his last team national champions.



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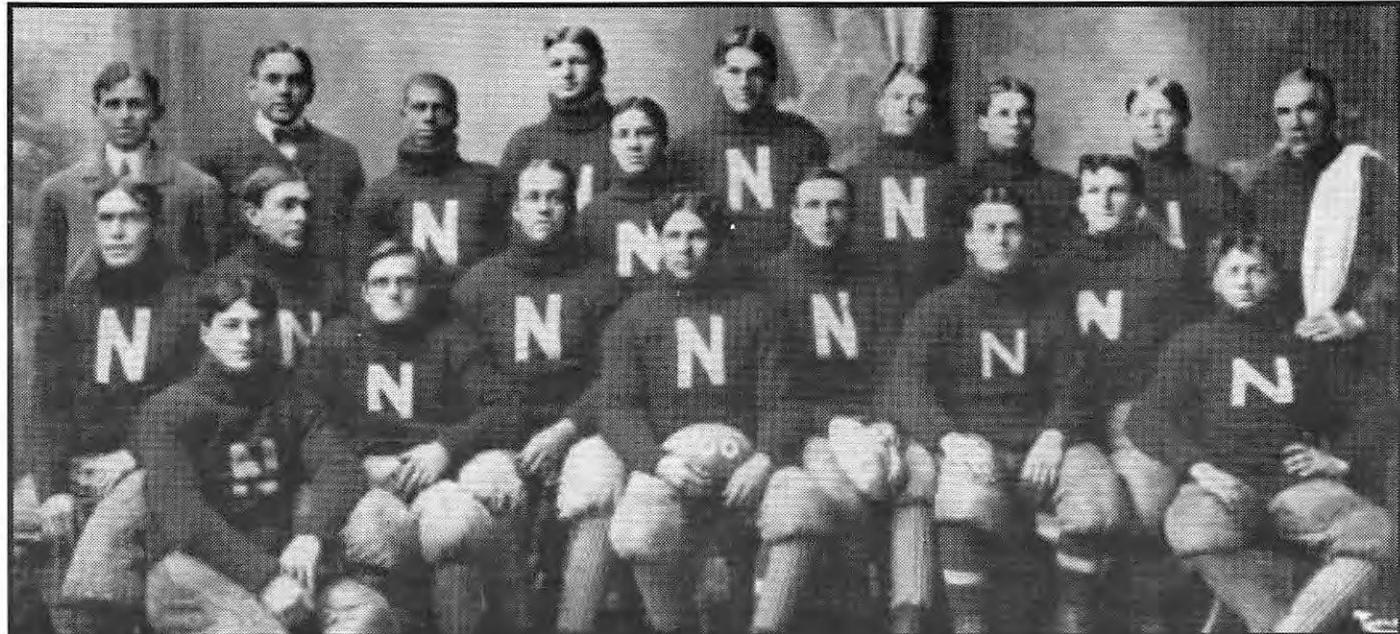
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JET'S RETROSPECTIVE

Winning Isn't Everything — But Isn't It Great?

Tom Osborne taught his players how to win and how to do it with integrity

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.

— Proverbs 22:1

I once heard someone say that wherever you are today, you made an appointment some time in your life to be there. Well, here we are with a third national championship under Tom Osborne.

Is that haphazard? No way. Dr. Tom has made the plan for us to be the best for a quarter of a century, and as they say, the rest is history. Twenty-five years ago, I don't think Tom planned to retire with a national championship, but he did plan to be a

He has taught us all about the rewards that come with being a disciplined person.

In my opinion, what makes Tom Osborne so great is his stability. He has been the same for the past 28 years I have known him — mild-mannered, down-to-earth, a man of integrity.

Experiencing 255 victories in 25 seasons, Nebraska's players were fortunate to be exposed to telling, instead of yelling, as a motivational tool used by their coach. They have had an opportunity to establish a friendship bond that transcended football, even in tough times.

The players know that they have

Joshua Levi Eickmeier



by
**JOHNNY
RODGERS**

me, it seems that if the Volunteers really expected to win the Orange Bowl game, they would have forgotten about politics and done what made the most sense.

And what made the most sense offensively against Nebraska would have been to put in the second-team quarterback, Tee Martin, whose skills were more likely to be successful against the Huskers.

At Nebraska, Osborne has made it clear that the Huskers aren't going to do anything fancy, unless fancy relates to winning, because the bottom line is that winning is what's important. He never motivated his players with a lot of "rah-rah" type speeches, but he kept them enthused with his knowledge of the game and the power to implement the system at its highest level.

I am very proud to know and to have had Tom Osborne as a friend for most of my adult life.

His ethics and beliefs are in people who want to succeed in life and win. He just implements God's system a little better than most of us. He is a great leader by example.

Osborne was directly responsible for my success in college and professional football because of what he taught me about the game. Furthermore, he assisted me, as a friend, on my quest to return to the classroom to finish my degree. Although Osborne may be retiring from coaching, his good name and accomplishments will live forever in the hearts of his players and Cornhusker fans everywhere.

Congratulations to Nebraska for winning a fifth national championship. It feels good to be living in the state that all the other states love to hate.

Nebraska has great fans, and everyone knows Nebraskans are good sports. Cornhusker fans want to win, but it's clear that winning isn't everything to Nebraskans. However, it does rate right up there with oxygen. ■



Thousands of Husker fans said farewell to Osborne by signing a giant farewell card.

stable and credible coach who abided by and led with honorable and moral principles. Winning doesn't ever come by accident.

Surpassing the accomplishments of his predecessor, Bob Devaney, Tom has established his own winning tradition and will leave the job with a well-deserved perfect season.

been taught by the best, and have always gone into games knowing that they have been fully prepared, giving them the confidence to do their best. The difference between Peyton Manning and Scott Frost in the Orange Bowl game was that Frost had the tools to execute Osborne's option offense to perfection.

Manning did not possess those skills, nor did he have the preparation to stand up to the Huskers' defensive rush. He was misguided, in a sense. To

Linemen Have Their Moments, Too

National awards, such as the Outland Trophy, give linemen a much-deserved moment of glory

History and tradition embrace the world of sports and send the achievements of teams and athletes into the archives of sports minds — achievements that later will be remembered, or compared, or simply dusted off to prove a point or bring a smile.

Many of those achievements are bold and obvious and are talked about all the time, like the "Game of the Century," Oklahoma versus Nebraska in 1971; the arrival and success of Bob Devaney in 1962; and the incredible success of Tom Osborne in his 25-year reign as head coach.

Others are more subtle but just as important, such as the play of quarterback Brook Berringer, who took over — along with Matt Turman — for the injured Tommie Frazier and kept the Huskers' national championship hopes alive in 1994; and the play of people such as Husker greats Larry Jacobson, Rich Glover, Dave Rimington, Dean Steinkuhler, Will Shields and Zach Wiegert, all of whom have this in common with current two-time All-American offensive lineman Aaron Taylor: They all have won the Outland Trophy, making Nebraska the nation's leader with eight Outland Trophy winners. (Oklahoma is second, with four.)

The Outland Trophy is awarded annually to the top interior lineman in college football and was started in 1946 by Dr. John H. Outland. Outland was an All-American at Pennsylvania as a lineman in his junior year and as a halfback in his senior year.

Realizing what it takes to play both positions, and that linemen didn't always get the recognition they deserved, he organized the Outland Trophy award, the first of which went to George Connor of Notre Dame.

Since the award's inception, the Outland Trophy winner has been chosen by the Football Writers Association of America and until now, has been presented to the winner in Oklahoma City. The FWAA and the Omaha Sports Committee have entered into a three-year agreement to bring the trophy presentation to Omaha, which Nebraska fans feel is the perfect home for the Outland.

Nebraska has been a frequent destination for the Outland, which has been won eight times by a Cornhusker. Nebraska is synonymous with great linemen. Part of the history and tradi-



by
**ADRIAN
FIALA**

Scott Smith



Taylor, winner of the Outland trophy, is one in a long line of notable Husker linemen.

tion of Nebraska football rests with the linemen, the guys in the trenches, the ignition switch for the offense. The entire 1995 Husker offensive line, made up of Taylor, Chris Dishman, Aaron Graham, Steve Ott and Eric Anderson, received the (Washington, D.C.) Touchdown Club's award for college football's "Lineman of the Year."

In the past, youngsters always wanted to be a quarterback or a running back. Today, some of those same youngsters are saying, "I want to be a center, guard or tackle." That's because of the recognition that the interior linemen are getting, especially at Nebraska. It points a young player to the line.

It's still not what would be characterized as a "glory" position. But each year, it gets a little better in terms of receiving a fair share of recognition.

This year's Outland candidate list started with 20 names. It was narrowed to three, who were invited to attend the 1997 announcement at the College Football Awards Ceremony in Orlando, Fla. Nebraska tradition stepped up again when Taylor and Jason Peter were named as finalists, along with Alan Faneca, a junior offensive lineman from LSU.

Taylor was a semifinalist last year, despite moving to center, where he also was named an All-American. He capped his career after returning to left guard. He was the first Husker lineman to be named All-American at two different positions.

Like Taylor, Peter was a consensus All-American this season and one of the most inspirational leaders the team has had in a long while. The race for the Outland was a close one between Taylor and Peter, with Taylor winning the prestigious award.

Hopefully, Omaha will be the Outland's permanent home and step up its presentation to one on equal footing with that of the Heisman Trophy. It is a lofty goal, but with some hard work, aggressive play and persistence, it is a goal that can be accomplished. Sounds like a lineman's work to me. ■

Adrian Fiala is a member of the Omaha Outland Sports Committee.

Close Encounter Of The Memorable Kind

*A simple car ride helped shape the perspective
of a young reporter*

It seems like only yesterday. You know the cliché.

But it was nearly 20 years ago, about 40 percent of my lifetime.

Tom Osborne had yet to coach victory No. 100. Three years earlier, he had considered an offer to become head coach at Colorado. The job would have paid him an annual salary of \$100,000 — nearly three times what he was making at Nebraska. Eddie Crowder was the Colorado athletic director.

Osborne and wife, Nancy, visited Boulder, Colo. That's how serious it was.

Osborne said later he turned down the offer after meeting with the players. He liked them. But he wouldn't have felt right coaching them against the ones he had recruited at Nebraska.

Immediately after turning down Crowder, Osborne went recruiting. Waste not, want not.

It was another time. You notice small clues in old photographs. The Cornhuskers' white game pants have double red stripes. Their facemasks are gray instead of red.

But the program's foundation was the same as it is now.

The purely personal story I am going to recount took place during this time, specifically in early October of 1981. Nebraska was preparing to play Colorado at Memorial Stadium.

It was a Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon.

Chuck Fairbanks, whom Crowder hired to replace Bill Mallory after Osborne said, "Thanks, but no thanks," was in his final season as the Buffaloes' head coach. Colorado would finish 3-8 in 1981.

It was not a happy time in the Flatiron Range. But then, it

wasn't a particularly happy time in Lincoln, either. Nebraska was off to a 2-2 start and had dropped out of the national rankings.

You'll find there were only about three weeks during Osborne's 25 seasons as head coach that the Cornhuskers weren't ranked in The Associated Press Top 20. This was one.

As a result, Osborne was dealing with a dreaded quarterback controversy, involving Mark Mauer, Nate Mason and Turner Gill, a much-publicized sophomore from Fort Worth, Texas.

Mauer and Mason alternated as the

Osborne's extraordinary focus on each opponent, regardless of its record, is one of the main reasons he leaves college football as one of the best to ever roam a sideline.



by
**MIKE
BABCOCK**

J.C. Ridley



starters for the first four games.

Gill got his first career start against Colorado. He threw for a school record-tying four touchdowns, and Nebraska won, 59-0, to return to the Top 20. It has never dropped out of the rankings since.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. This story takes place the week before the game.

I was a newspaper reporter, assigned to the Cornhusker football beat.

The job at the *Lincoln Journal and Star* was still new to me. I had been hired in 1978, after applying for an opening that I didn't know for certain existed. But that's another story.

I always have had the greatest respect for Osborne, and because of that, I was uncomfortable around him during my early years on the Nebraska football beat. That's important in all of this.

It was early afternoon, and I had just left the office to walk to Memorial Stadium, where I planned to interview a player for a feature I was writing for the next day's editions.

As I stood on the corner of 10th and Q, waiting for the light to change, someone called my name. "Want a ride to the stadium, Mike?" Osborne was in his Wheel Club station wagon, across the street on Q, waiting to turn right onto 10th, which went past Memorial Stadium at the time.

No sooner had he posed the question than the light turned green. To avoid traffic backing up behind him because he was waiting for me, I jogged diagonally through the intersection.

As I passed in front of Osborne's station wagon, I hit some gravel.

What follows occurred in an instant. But it seemed like much longer. I went down, disappear-

ing from sight. I slid on the pavement, in front of the station wagon, tearing my slacks.

In that instant, I imagined Osborne driving over me, which, I thought, might be for the best under the circumstances. I was mortified, my credibility as it related to Osborne shattered.

I managed to pull myself up. My impulse was to decline the offer for a ride. "Thanks Coach, but I think I'll just walk to the stadium." But that would have simply called attention to the situation.

I settled in and stared straight ahead, trying not to bleed on the seat.

Osborne and I rode in silence to the South Stadium parking lot. "Just let me get out," I thought. I wondered how I would ever be able to ask him a question without eliciting laughter.

Osborne finally spoke as he turned into the parking lot. His words were matter-of-fact.

"You know, Mike, I don't think the fans are taking Colorado seriously enough, do you?"

That's all he said. I thanked him for the ride, exited the station wagon and sought asylum in Steve Pederson's office. Pederson was in his first year as football recruiting coordinator.

I told him the story, hoping for some advice on how to salvage the situation. Pederson laughed.

"Next time you interview Tom after practice, fall down like Chevy Chase," he said.

Osborne never brought up the subject, which I appreciated. On reflection, however, I wondered if he had even noticed my brief disappearance in front of his station wagon that October afternoon.

At the time, I figured the remark about the fans taking Colorado lightly was an attempt to change the subject. With the passing of time, however, I realize there's another possibility.

Perhaps Osborne didn't notice my clumsiness. Perhaps he was so concerned about Colorado that he wasn't aware I had spent a second or two on the pavement, contemplating my still-new career.

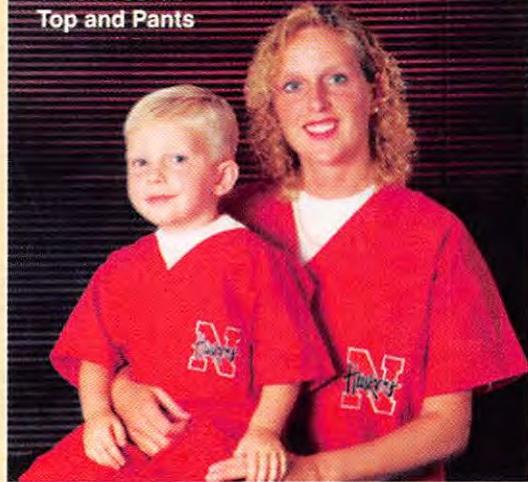
I've never asked him about the incident. For one thing, it would be egotistical on my part. For another, it came to represent for me Osborne's extraordinary focus on each opponent.

Besides, it became something of a point of pride. It was a shared experience, sort of, with one of the greatest coaches in the college football history.

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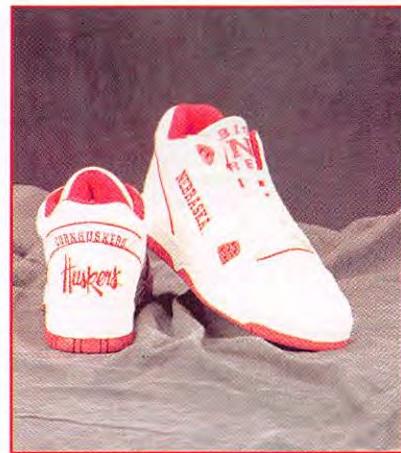
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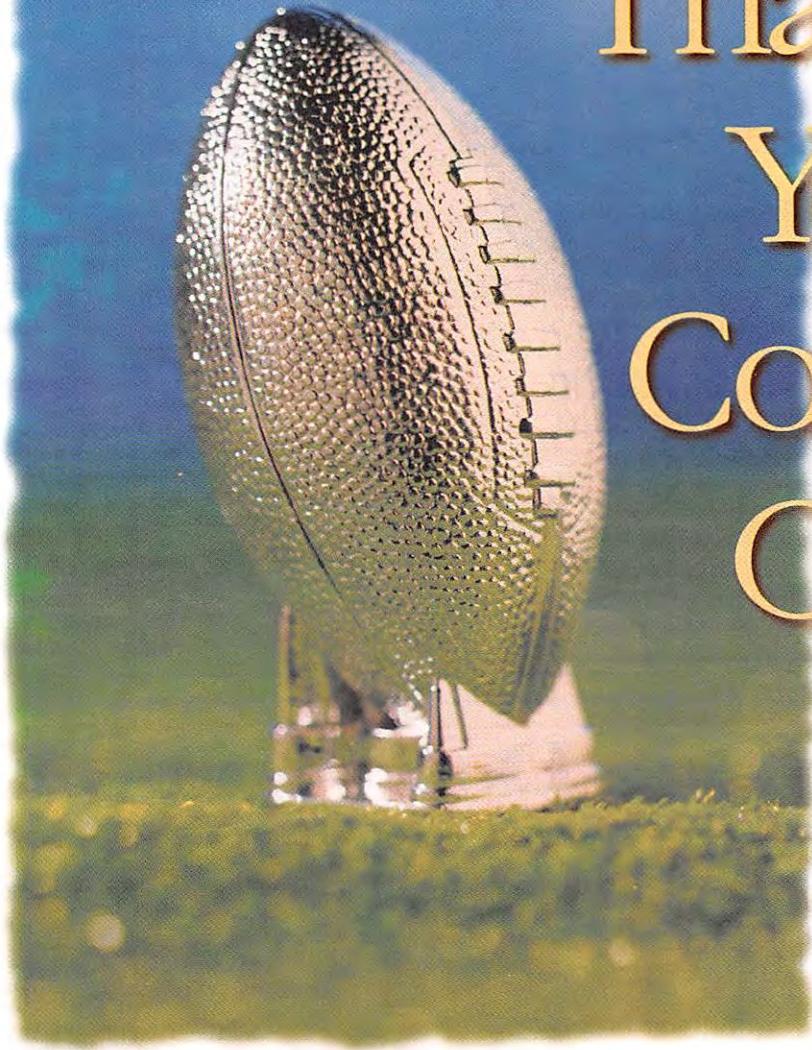
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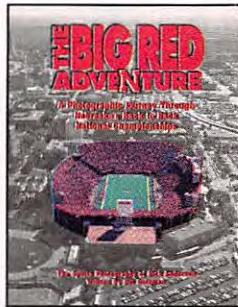
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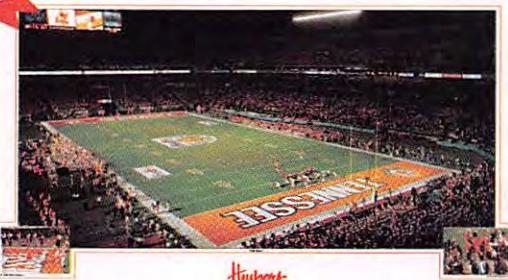
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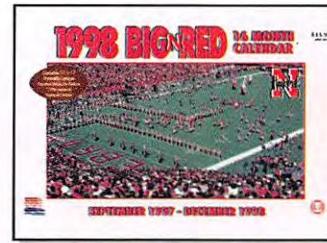
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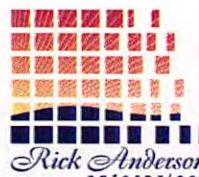


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**Arguments were made
and votes were swayed.
In the end, Nebraska
had the trophy
it coveted**

By Mike Babcock

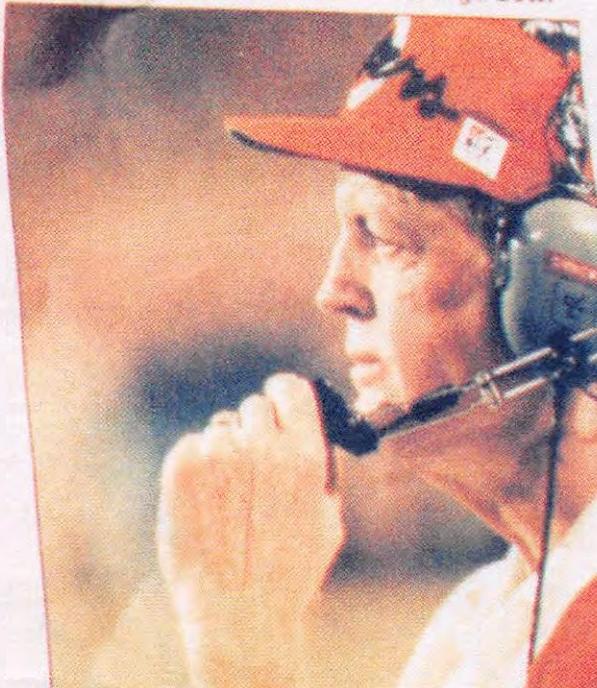
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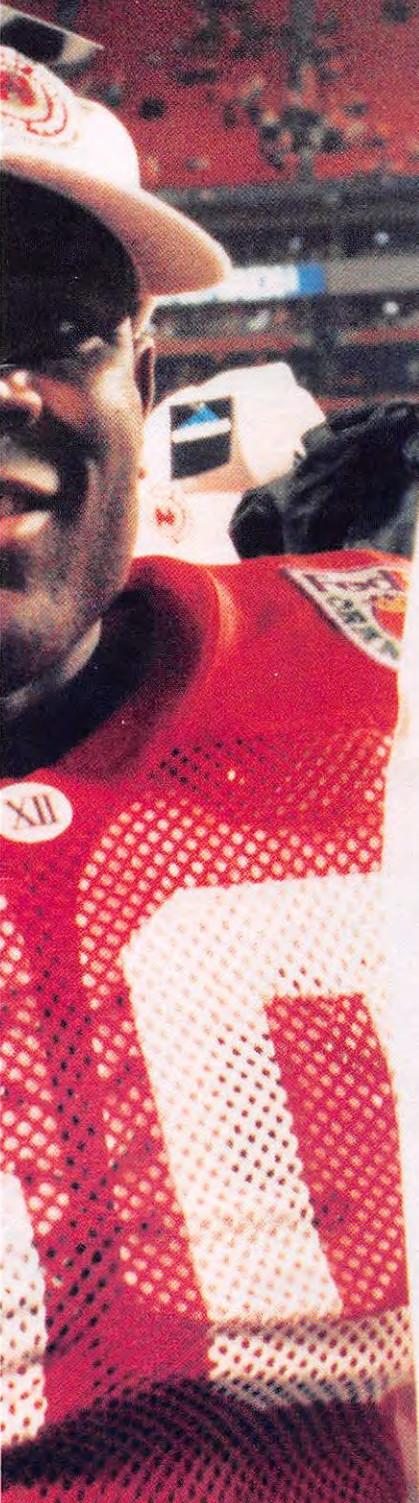
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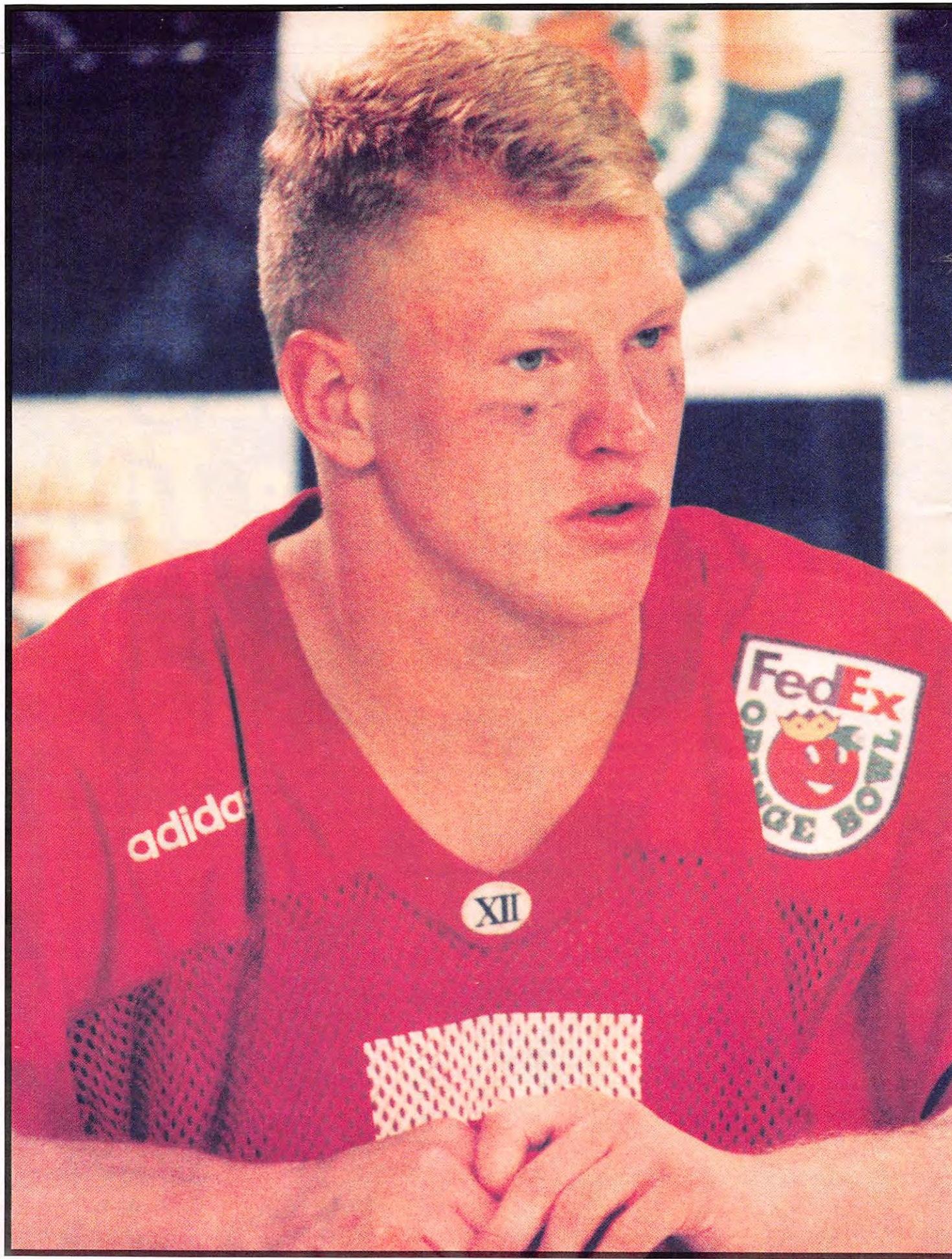
WE'RE NO.

Nebraska Sends Tom Osborne Out A Winner
And Stakes Claim To National Title
With Win Over Tennessee In Orange Bowl



Julius Jackson and Nebraska hit the campaign trail in search of votes following the Orange Bowl.





Scott Frost made an impassioned plea directed at coaches who voted in the USA Today/ESPN poll following Nebraska's 42-17 victory against Tennessee in the Orange Bowl game.

The senior quarterback stood on a podium at Pro Player Stadium and lobbied one last time in front of CBS television cameras. Cornhusker fans who made the trip to Miami cheered.

The sounds of "Osborne, Osborne, Osborne" filled the night.

If Frost's words were harsh from a Michigan perspective, so be it. Someone had to speak on Nebraska's behalf. The Associated Press national championship had been conceded to the Wolverines, following their 21-16 victory against Washington State in the Rose Bowl game the previous afternoon.

The national media had established the dictum that No. 1 in the rankings depended on performance during the season. But at bowl time, winning was all that mattered.

Never had a No. 1-ranked team that won its bowl game ever been dropped from the top spot, as if that were all anyone really needed to know. Despite accepting that tradition, however, many of the same people applauded the selection of Michigan's Charles Woodson as the Heisman Trophy winner.

No predominantly defensive player had ever been voted the Heisman. Was that reason not to vote for Woodson, a defensive back who also returned kicks and played receiver? Of course not.

Just because something has always been a certain way doesn't make it right.

It was that point Frost tried to make, using Nebraska's victory against Tennessee.

"I don't think people change their votes because of what somebody says, much," Tom Osborne said during a news conference at the Westin Resort-Miami Beach the next day.

"That's why I've never gotten into that lobbying much. I do vote, and I don't pay a whole lot of attention to what somebody says. But I appreciate the fact Scott felt as strongly as he did."

Whether any coaches were persuaded by Frost's speech to change their vote is doubtful. Nebraska's performance against No. 3-ranked Tennessee, however, was another matter.

The trophy — a crystal football atop a black base — sponsored by Sears and presented to the national champion as determined by the USA Today/ESPN poll was irrefutable evidence of that.

It sat to Osborne's right at the post-Orange Bowl news conference.

Osborne hadn't listened to what Frost said the previous night. It was all but impossible in the celebration that fol-

lowed the decisive victory in his final game as head coach.

"I didn't hear the speech," he said. "I just heard about it."

Frost summarized it during post-game interviews.

"Here is what I said: 'This is my 30 seconds of fame, so all you guys get this on camera.' The AP has pretty much given it (the national championship) away. It's up to the coaches," Frost said. "I'm so proud of this team and Coach Osborne. I don't want to see him go out without a championship."

"I basically have two points for the coaches. One, if you can look yourself in the mirror and say if your job depended on playing either Michigan or Nebraska, who would you rather play?"

Frost said Michigan won the Rose Bowl "with a controversial play at the end," an overstatement to be sure, while the Cornhuskers "took apart the third-ranked team in the country.

"The second point I have is: I can't see how any coach outside of the Big Ten or Pac-10 would vote for Michigan because if somebody from North Carolina, Florida State, West Virginia, wherever it might be, Notre Dame, coaches from there . . . if they were undefeated and won the Alliance Bowl game, they would expect to share the national title. It's been split before. It's OK to split it. It should be split."

Frost couldn't contain himself. "It's up to the coaches," he said. "How is that?"

His fervor drew laughter from the reporters in the interview room.

There was precedent for a split national championship. Prior to this season, the coaches and writers had selected different champions nine times since 1950 — the first year of the coaches' poll.

Washington and Miami were the most recent co-national champions, in 1991 — the season before, Georgia Tech and Colorado were national champions, depending on the poll.

Nebraska's first national championship in 1970 was shared. The Cornhuskers were No. 1 according to the Associated Press, which waited until after the bowl games to compile its final poll. Texas was the 1970 national champion according to the United Press International coaches' poll.

Frost sat with defensive tackle Jason Peter and rush end Grant Wistrom during the post-Orange Bowl interview session. Peter disagreed with Frost on the shared national title.

"If you ask me, I don't even think it should be a split

"If you can look yourself in the mirror and say if your job depended on playing either Michigan or Nebraska, who would you play? It's been split before. It's OK to split it. It should be split."
— Scott Frost

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title," Peter said. "I mean, we proved today that we're the best team in the country, without a doubt. Don't give it to Michigan because they haven't seen it in 45 years (actually 50). Give it to us because we're the best team in the country."

There seemed to be sentiment among some of those who voted in the AP media poll to go with Michigan because the Wolverines hadn't won a national title since the 1948 season.

If Nebraska and Michigan were to play each other, "who do you think would be figured to win?" Wistrom asked somewhat rhetorically. "We're the No. 1 team in the country. If anybody looks at strength of schedule, we beat some of the toughest teams in the country this year. If anybody in their heart can honestly find not to vote us No. 1, that's their problem. If you're not going to vote it, give it to Michigan because they haven't won in 45 years. Then who cares? We don't want it anyway.

"If you want to vote for the best team in the country, vote for us."

"If you ask me, I don't even think it should be a split title. I mean, we proved today that we're the best team in the country, without a doubt. Don't give it to Michigan because they haven't seen it in 45 years (actually 50). Give it to us because we're the best team in the country."

— Jason Peter

Peter suggested the teams could play in his backyard in Locust, N.J. "If you guys want to go there, no problem," he said to more laughter.

"The thing is, we have so much pride in this team and Coach Osborne," Frost said. "I don't know who would win the game if we played. I think I know. I think all you guys know. The thing I'd like to say is, who would be favored? I think if we played, I'd like to see a line on that game because I think it would be seven, 10, 14 points. Any time it's that way and you vote another way, you've got to be crazy."

Osborne was less adamant than his players about the degree of disparity between Michigan and Nebraska, if there was any. His position was unchanged. He said voters in both polls should watch Michigan in the Rose Bowl and Nebraska in the Orange Bowl and then decide.

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," Osborne said after the final polls were announced. "I'm sure people voted as they did for different reasons. My feeling is that

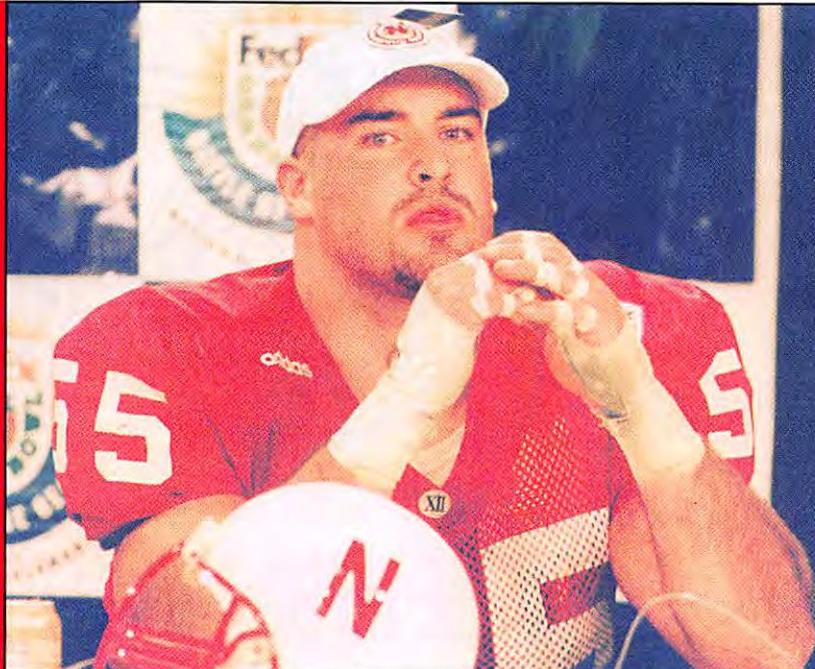
how you vote should be determined by what team would be favored over every other team at the end of the year, regardless of when the last time was you won a national championship, which coach is retiring and all the sidebars."

Despite Michigan's 21-16 victory against Washington State in the Rose Bowl and the constant references to the fact no No. 1 team had ever dropped after winning a bowl game, Osborne said he felt the Cornhuskers' national championship chances were "50-50" going into the Orange Bowl game.

"It wasn't like I thought it was uphill," he said. "We talked to the players after we watched the Michigan-Washington State game, got them together right afterward. We knew they were down."

The players were shown a motivational videotape put together by Dr. Jack Stark, the team performance psychologist, "just five minutes, but it kind of re-focused the football team," said Osborne.

"It was just a recap of the season, some of the great things that happened during the year, some of the seniors



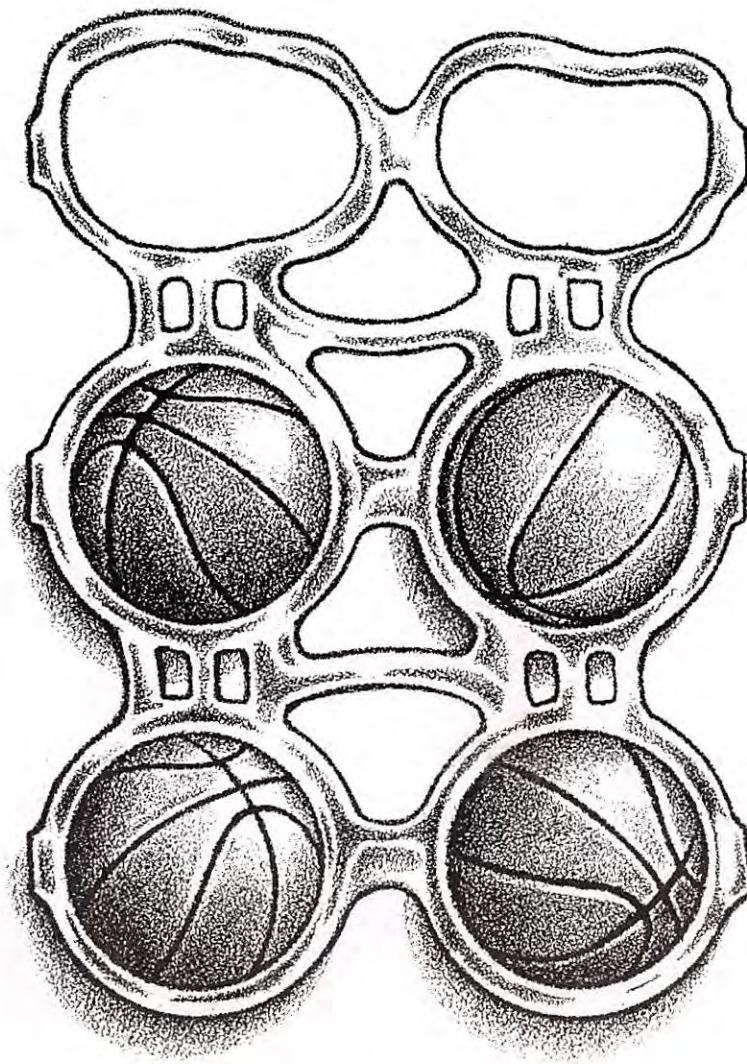
talking a little bit about the season. It was a reminder we had worked hard to get to this point and what we were here for. It wasn't anything outlandish. It was a good idea."

The team had watched the Rose Bowl game together, and the tape was intended to temper attitudes, regardless of the outcome. "Either they were going to be really psyched up because Michigan had lost or maybe they'd be down because Michigan had won," Osborne said.

"We wanted them more on middle ground."

If the Wolverines had overwhelmed Washington State, they probably would have slammed the door to the coaches' national championship, as they had done with the door to the AP title.

After the Rose Bowl game, however, "I said, you know, that door's open at least a crack. It wasn't a thumping," said Osborne. "If Michigan had won by three or four touchdowns, we'd probably be out of it. But it's open, and we've got to take advantage of it. We've got to make sure it's wide-open. We tried to re-emphasize that before the



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(Orange Bowl) game. They took it to heart and played very hard.

"But they were going to do that anyway."

To anyone outside the team, the Cornhuskers were national-title longshots, at best. They had only one first-place vote out of 70 in the final regular-season AP poll, an indication of the media infatuation with the Wolverines, and only 8.5 out of 62 first-place votes in the coaches poll.

In addition, though it was rarely articulated — and no one would likely admit it, anyway — there seemed to be some inclination to vote for Michigan because Penn State had finished second to Nebraska in both polls in 1994, even though the Nittany Lions also were undefeated and untied.

In any case, the Cornhuskers had no idea what would happen when they began celebrating the Orange Bowl victory. "We wanted to make a statement by the way we played," said Aaron Taylor, the Outland Trophy winner. "I think we did that. We know in our hearts we are the best team in the country. That's what's exciting, that we came through this season undefeated for Coach Osborne."

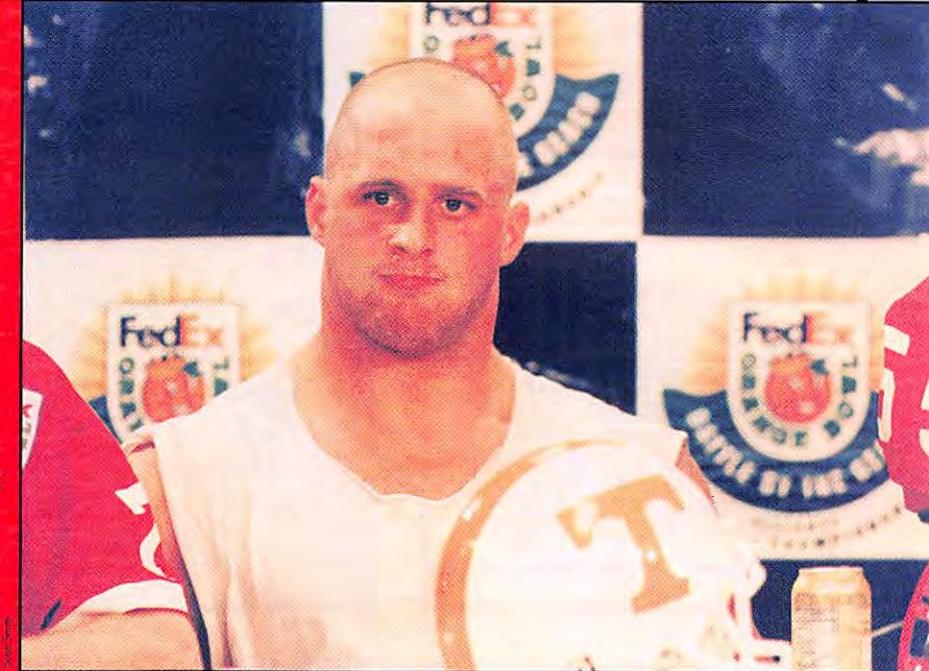
they've had, they very much deserve to be national champions, and I guess when you go 13-0 and have the kind of year we had, we hope some kind of recognition would come also. So we're all very gratified that the coaches voted as they did.

"I know a lot of players are very happy. Of course, a lot of them had been part of national championships before. But in two years time, a lot of changes take place. I suppose 50, 60 percent of our squad had not been involved in national championships, so they're very meaningful, particularly to those guys. I think for the seniors to go out with another was a really big thing for them, too."

Nebraska finished ahead of Michigan in the USA Today/ESPN poll by the slimmest of margins, two first-place votes. Eight of the 62 coaches split their first-place votes between the two.

The Cornhuskers also picked up 17.5 first-place votes in the AP poll. Even though that still left them a distant second, it was significant given the fact they had only one first-place vote before.

"Who do you think would be favored to win (if Nebraska and Michigan played)? We're the No. 1 team in the country. If anybody looks at strength of schedule, we beat some of the toughest teams in the country this year. If anybody in their heart can honestly find not to vote us No. 1, that's their problem."
— Grant Wistrom



The 13-0 season was Nebraska's second under Osborne, and it was the third time in the last four seasons that the Cornhuskers have gone undefeated and untied to win a national title.

The victory was Nebraska's fourth in a row in a bowl game and gave Osborne a 60-3 record over his last five seasons. He went into the Orange Bowl game second among major college football coaches in winning percentage — behind Phillip Fulmer, who completed his sixth season at Tennessee.

With the victory, Osborne moved back ahead of Fulmer. But only briefly. The next morning, Osborne was no longer an active head coach. His final record is 255-49-3, an .836 winning percentage.

Osborne was satisfied with a share of a third national title, more for his players, probably, than for himself, and "I'm really pleased for the University of Michigan, strangely enough," he said.

"Any time somebody goes 12-0 and has the kind of year

"Being a coach, I know a little bit how they think," Osborne said. "I think they probably looked at the fact we were 13-0 and to be unrewarded in some way would be . . . I don't mean to say an injustice, but it wouldn't be a good thing. I think they felt Tennessee, the SEC, plays very good football, and for us to beat the SEC champion fairly decisively, probably was a major thing in their thinking."

It was a major thing in Fulmer's thinking.

He began his post-Orange Bowl game news conference by congratulating Osborne and Nebraska. "They certainly did a great job," he said. "I've been asked probably 16 times between the field and here who I was going to vote for. I'll say it again. I will vote for Nebraska as the No. 1 team in America."

That was music to Frost's ears. "There's no question we deserve a share of the title," he said.

In the early-morning hours of Jan. 3, the results of the polls were announced.

And Frost got his wish. ■



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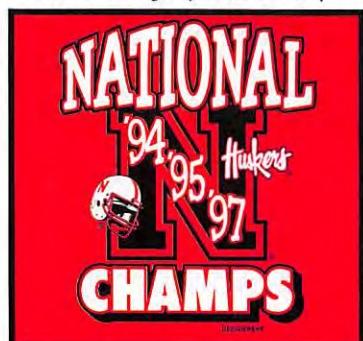
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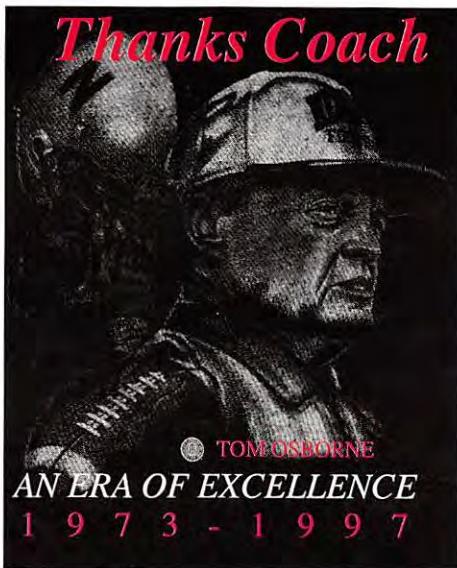


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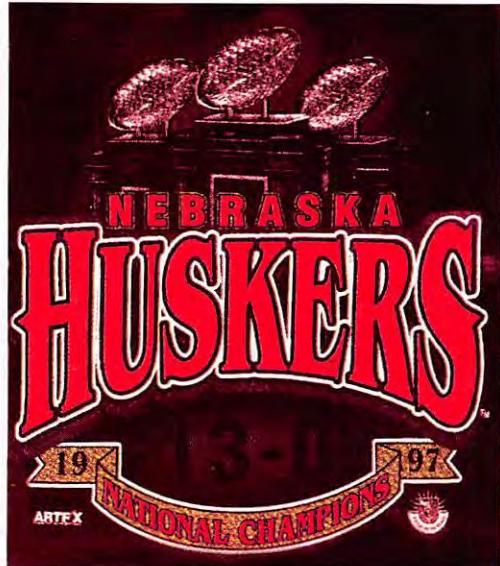
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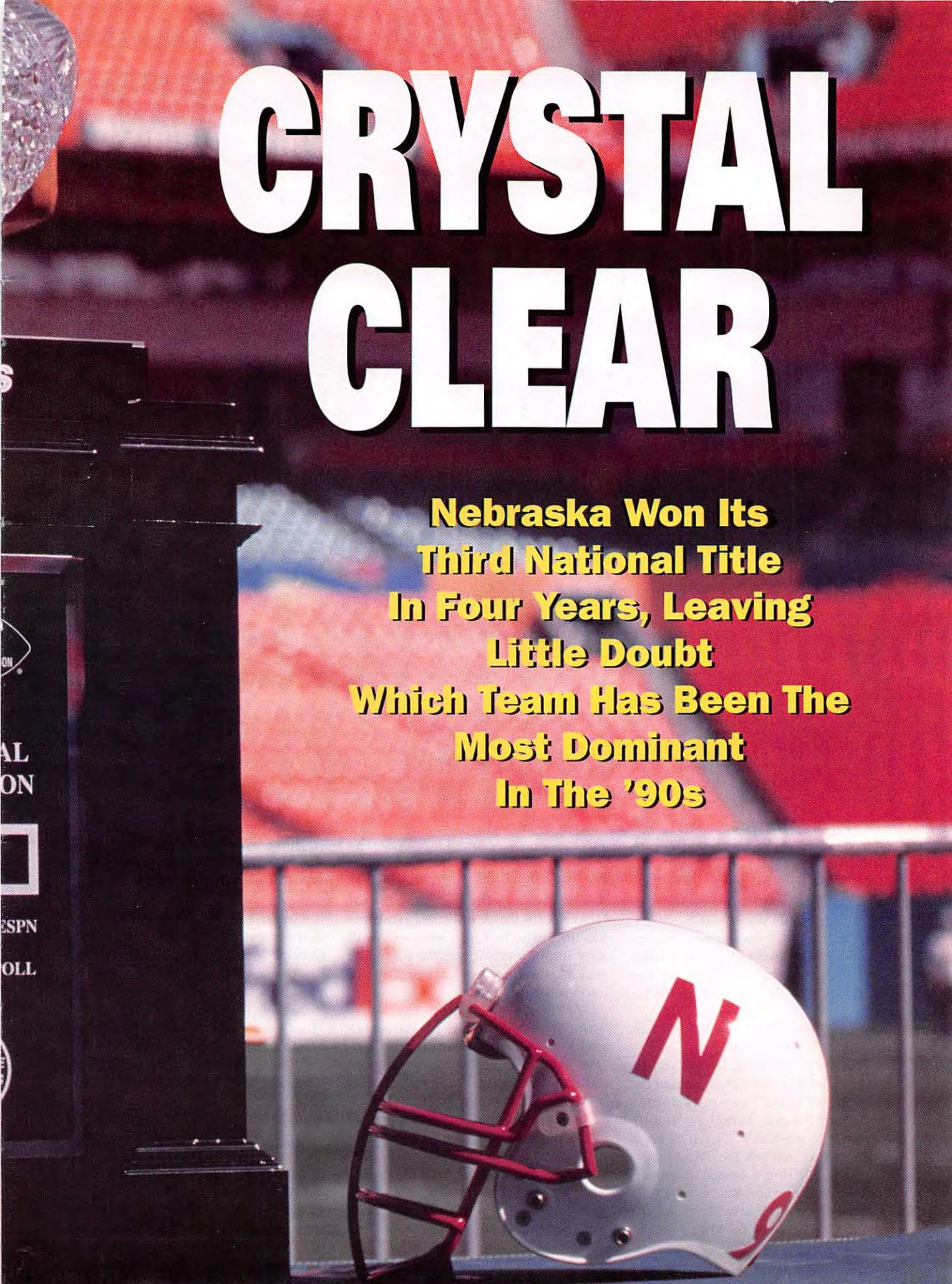
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THE TOUCHDOWN drive was vintage Nebraska: 12 plays, 80 yards, 4:49. With it, any doubt about the outcome of the 1998 Orange Bowl game evaporated into the south Florida night.

Just one of the plays was a pass — and that by definition rather than in fact. What appeared to be a pitch from Scott Frost to Ahman Green, on the second play of the drive, was ruled a pass.

Otherwise, the Cornhuskers ran right at the Tennessee defense.

They were relentless, never facing a third or fourth down. Green carried six times for 29 yards. Frost rushed three times for 12 yards. Wingback Bobby Newcombe picked up 9 yards on a reverse. And fullback Joel Makovicka, who was battling a hamstring pull, burst through the line for 24 yards.

Frost capped the drive from 1 yard out, for the first of his three touch-

downs.

That's how Nebraska opened the second half of its 42-17 victory against Tennessee.

That was the signature of Nebraska's third national championship in the last four seasons. And, most importantly, it was the means by which the Cornhuskers sent Tom Osborne out a winner.

"None of us as coaches or players wanted to lose the game," defensive backs coach George Darlington said. "We would have felt a terrible responsibility for the rest of our lives."

Tennessee was physically dominated in the second half. "I sensed it early in the third quarter," said Green, who rushed for an Orange Bowl-record 206 yards and two touchdowns on 29 carries.

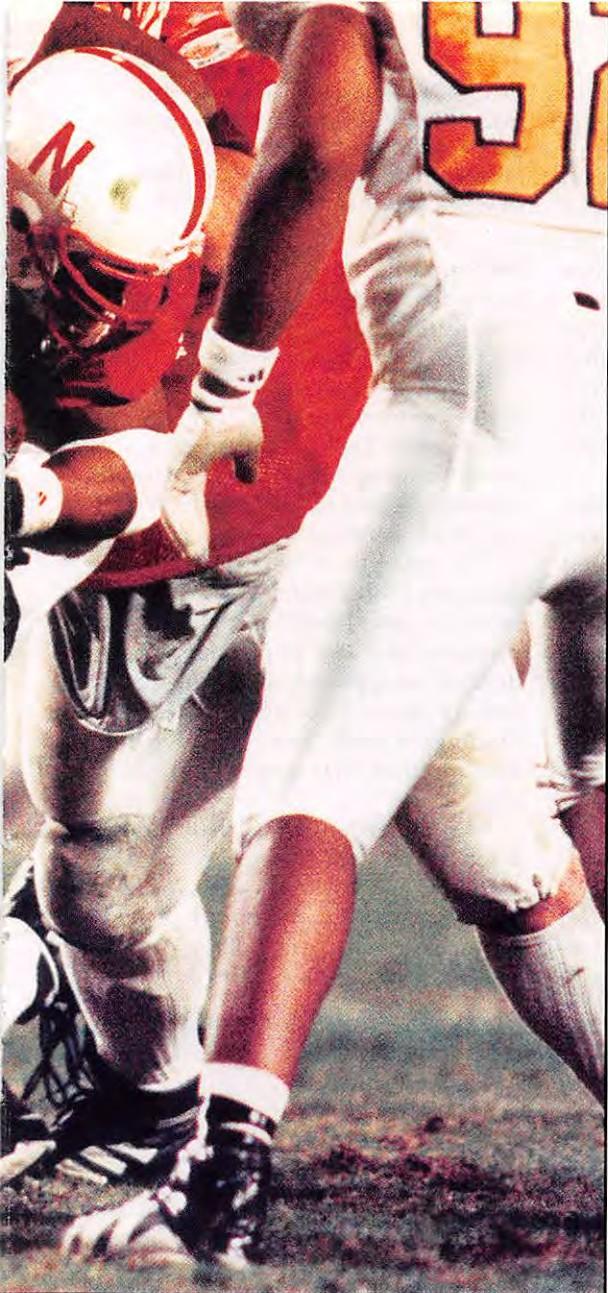
"We could see it in their eyes. They were bending over, gasping for air."

After managing only 69 yards rushing in the first half, NU put the ball in Orange Bowl MVP Ahman Green's capable hands.

Green was describing a situation that occurred countless times during Osborne's 25 seasons as head coach. "I knew if we could keep on doing it, we'd have the game," Green said.

In truth, Nebraska probably already "had" the game. But the fact it had been able to convert three first-half Tennessee turnovers into only a 14-3 lead gave the Volunteers a glimmer of hope.

"We were fortunate to only be down 11 points after the turnovers," Tennessee coach Phillip Fulmer said. "I think our team felt really good about their chances to win the ball game because physically they (the Cornhuskers) hadn't just dominated.



We felt good about where we were."

Tennessee had limited Nebraska to 178 first-half yards, 109 of them on Scott Frost's 7-of-10 passing. The Cornhuskers had managed an uncharacteristic 69 yards on 28 rushes.

Tennessee's defensive approach was to concentrate on stopping the run, even to the point of making concessions to the pass, "certainly the lesser of the two evils," Fulmer said.

That approach, coupled with a Cornhusker fumble deep in Tennessee territory just before the intermission, seemed to work. In fact, "if we covered a little bit better, they wouldn't have had so many yards passing," Fulmer said. "If not for the turnovers, it would have been interesting."

Maybe so. Maybe not. But the first fumble, which was caused by Ralph Brown and recovered by Mike Rucker, gave Nebraska the ball at its own 22-

yard line. And the second, recovered by Lance Brown on a mishandled punt, gave the Cornhuskers a first down at the Tennessee 15-yard line.

Nebraska converted both into touchdowns, driving 78 yards on eight plays for the first, a 1-yard dive into the end zone by Green. Frost was 3-for-3 passing for 63 of the yards. Shevin Wiggins scored the second touchdown, on a 10-yard reverse, on the fourth play after Brown's recovery.

As it turned out, the first half was little more than a point of comparison for the second. The Cornhuskers overwhelmed the Tennessee defense during the third quarter.

"They handed us our butts, physically," Fulmer said. Nebraska ran "basically the same plays," against "basically the same defenses. But physically, we got mismatched, whipped."

On their second possession of the third quarter, the Cornhuskers covered 73 yards in six plays, the sixth an 11-yard run by Frost. On their third possession, they went 80 yards in four plays.

Green bolted 47 yards on the first play. Makovicka ran 8 yards on the second. Green picked up 3 yards on the third, and then 22 yards to score the touchdown that increased the lead to 35-9.

Tennessee put together a 9-play, 72-yard touchdown drive, finished off by a 5-yard pass from Peyton Manning to

Peerless Price to answer Nebraska's fourth touchdown, earning the Blackshirts something of a dressing down from Osborne on the sideline immediately afterward.

Osborne said he was more concerned about the way the Volunteers drove to the touchdown than he was about the touchdown itself. Freshman tailback Jamal Lewis, whom Nebraska recruited out of high school in Atlanta, Ga., carried three times for gains of 6, 9 and 23 yards on the drive.

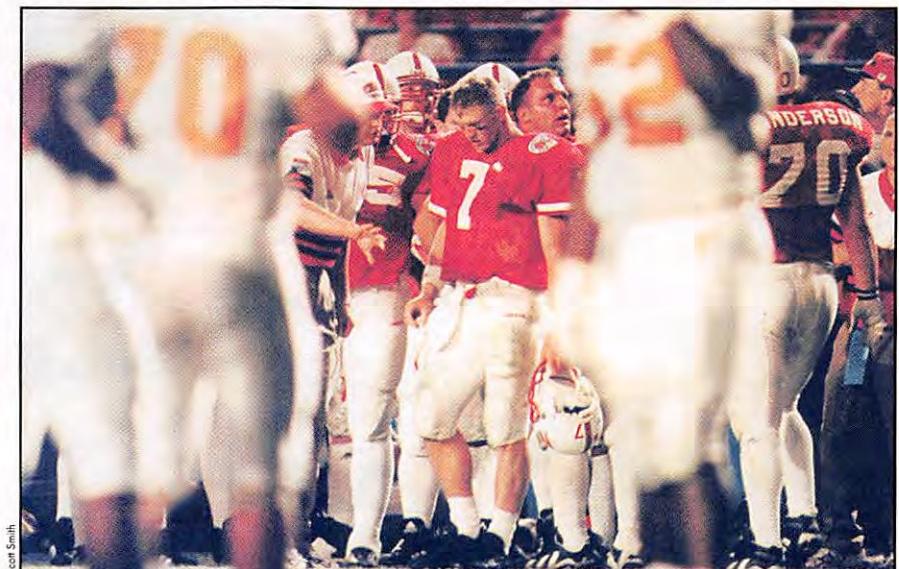
"He got in our faces, and he told us what we had to do," said defensive tackle Jason Peter, who led the Cornhuskers with seven tackles, six of which were unassisted. "Right then, you know, we knew this man wanted it more than anything. There was no way we were going to let him down. Offensively, we just pounded it down their throat. And defensively, we shut them down pretty good."

Lewis finished with 90 yards on 14 carries to earn the award as the outstanding Tennessee player in the game, while Green was chosen Nebraska's most valuable player.

"On their first scoring (touchdown) drive, they ran the ball on us," Osborne said at a news conference on the morning after the game. "I didn't think they should run the ball on us."

"I thought if they were going to move it, they'd have to move it through the air. I wasn't going to say anything if they hit some passes, but when they started running it through us, I was not happy."

With the Volunteers stacking the line of scrimmage, Osborne unveiled his "shell game," directing Scott Frost to go to the pass to loosen things up.



Scott Smith

"Defense is played a lot with emotion, and sometimes you get up to a certain amount of a lead and it's just natural for the defense to relax a little bit. I felt maybe that was happening."

The Cornhuskers had to weather such a letdown in their final regular-season victory at Colorado. And Osborne didn't want a repeat. "With a guy like Manning out there, and their receivers, we could not afford at any point to let down," he said. "I didn't want to see us have to struggle right to the end."

"I knew what our capabilities were on defense, and I knew we could stop the run."

The question was whether Nebraska's defense could contain Manning, who finished an unexpected second to Michigan's Charles Woodson in voting for the Heisman Trophy.

Manning's right knee, which was injured in the Southeastern Conference championship game against Auburn,

Despite a sore hamstring that could have kept him out of the game, fullback Joel Makovicka finished as the team's second-leading rusher with 62 yards.

was a subject of much discussion throughout bowl preparations. His health was a concern right up until kickoff. As a result, Fulmer said he planned to use both Manning and backup Tee Martin, a sophomore from Mobile, Ala., whom the Cornhuskers also recruited — and almost landed.

Martin took only a handful of snaps near game's end, however. Fulmer went with Manning hoping to avoid Nebraska's pass rush and exploit the Cornhuskers' relatively young secondary.

Manning completed 21-of-31 passes, but only for 134 yards and the touchdown to Price. He was intercepted by Eric Warfield, an opportunity on which Nebraska couldn't capitalize.

The Cornhuskers sacked Manning only once — Rucker got to him for a 9-yard loss. But "we forced him into a three-step game . . . or his injury forced him into a three-step game," said Darlington. "When that happens, normally what happens is you get a lot of short passes or you get a fade route."

"But it's difficult to throw the ball consistently down the field. And when he tried to go downfield, we had people covering; I didn't see a lot of people

While Tennessee came into the game with plenty of team speed on its sideline, it was Bobby Newcombe and Nebraska that proved to be too fast to catch.

ple running loose. So I was really pleased with the way our kids played. I honestly don't think I could have expected them to play better."

Nebraska's defensive game plan was proven, and sound. The Cornhuskers kept the pressure on up front, rotating Rucker, Peter, Grant Wistrom, Chad Kelsay, Jason Wiltz and Steve Warren.

"We tried to do what we've been doing for a lot of years, and that is try to really mix things, mix in a lot of pressure, fake a lot of pressure, try to develop an approach where the quarterback doesn't get any pre-reads," Darlington said. "We tried to show him pictures that maybe he hasn't seen."

Manning, who stopped by the lockerroom afterward to congratulate the Cornhuskers, said Nebraska's defensive success was more a result of execution than surprise. "They didn't really do anything in particular that

J.C. Ridley







Scott Smith

Mike Rucker (84) got to Peyton Manning early but it wasn't until Osborne gave the Blackshirts a dressing down in the second half that Jason Peter and mates shut down the Vol ground attack.

we haven't seen on film before . . . they're a good defense.

"I thought we made some mistakes as an offense that kind of put ourselves in tough positions, penalties at the start of the game. Any time you turn the ball over, it's tough to beat a team like Nebraska."

Tennessee's offense was based on short passes that receivers turned into big gains. The Cornhusker defense allowed the completions, but it was successful in preventing the big gains.

Nebraska was sure in its one-on-one tackling. Cornerback Erwin Swiney, rover Mike Brown and strong-side linebacker Tony Ortiz each were credited with five tackles, all unassisted.

Warfield, the free safety, made four unassisted tackles.

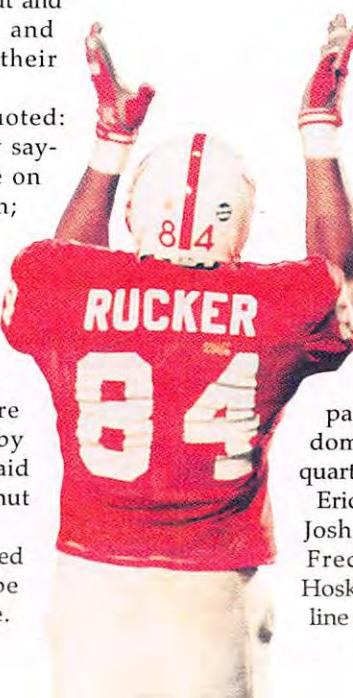
Swiney and Joe Walker, another freshman defensive back, allegedly were involved in the only pre-bowl controversy. In its editions on the day

before the game, the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* carried a story headlined "Nebraska's bowl-week trash talk has UT receivers hot," in which Price and Jeremaine Copeland claimed that Swiney and Walker, as well as sophomore Jerome Peterson, had shown them disrespect at a local nightspot. "They were like, 'We're going to kill y'all,'" Price was quoted.

"We want to go out and prove them wrong and make them eat their words."

Copeland was quoted: "They were basically saying we shouldn't be on the field with them; you're not a real team; you're not a powerhouse team, and we're just going to crush you and run you right off the field. I feel we're getting downed by Nebraska . . . they said they were going to shut us down, period."

Copeland predicted the game would be "like a big rumble."



You'll see a lot of trash talking."

The competition was intense, but never out of control. And as mentioned earlier, Manning — and his father Archie — made a special effort to pay his respects afterward. "He was tired, and I was tired," said Osborne, who called the brief visit "really an outstanding gesture on his part."

Manning earned the respect of his Cornhusker counterpart, Frost. "He's such a great player," Frost said. "I found myself watching the game. I like to pick things up he's doing."

"As far as I'm concerned, he's the best in the country."

Peter interrupted to disagree. "Scott outplayed Peyton Manning," he said. "Scott was the man out on the field. A lot of people have been giving him a hard time — last year, a little bit this year. Without a doubt, he proved himself as one of the best quarterbacks in the country, easily, tonight."

Frost, who sat with Peter and Wistrom at the post-game interview, was asked if he took satisfaction in passing for only 9 fewer yards than Manning.

"Some," he said. "But I take more satisfaction in the fact that 'JP' (Peter) just said that. These two guys right here fought and scratched and everything."

"That's the other thing. Michigan's and Nebraska's defense are not worlds apart."

Michigan led the nation in defense, while the Cornhuskers ranked fifth. They would have ranked even higher if the majority of Nebraska's victories hadn't been so lopsided allowing Osborne to substitute liberally.

Nebraska's defense contributed to the physical "whipping" to which Fulmer referred. But it was the offense, and the line in particular, that established dominance during the third quarter.

Eric Anderson, Jon Zatechka, Josh Heskew, Aaron Taylor, Fred Pollack and Matt Hoskinson took control of the line of scrimmage, as they did

so many times during the 13-0 season.

"They were getting fatigued in the middle of the second quarter," Taylor said.

"You could hear them huffing and puffing. They eventually rolled over, and we could do what we wanted to them."

Green rushed for more than 100 yards for a 12th consecutive time — he gained 99 yards in barely a half in the opener against Akron. As usual, he was profuse in his praise of the linemen.

"They've been blocking for me well all year," he said. "It's a big incentive for them to go out and give me an MVP in the Orange Bowl," Green said. "That means a great deal to them . . . to me."

"I've got to give it to my line, and the offense as a whole."

Despite Tennessee's first touchdown, Nebraska owned the third quarter. The Cornhuskers scored 21 points. They picked up 11 first downs and controlled the ball for more than nine minutes. And they gained 233 yards, 227 of them on 21 rushes — an average of more than 10 yards per attempt.

When all was said and done, Nebraska had 534 total yards, including 409 rushing.

That the offensive line would take charge was inevitable. After all, it opened the way for nation's leading offense. But early on, Tennessee's defense "came out fired up and stopped our run," Taylor said.

So "we had to loosen up their defense with our passes."

That responsibility was Frost's. "Scott threw the ball exceptionally well, made some great throws that kind of got them off our backs," Osborne said. Then "we began to get a few things working."

Tennessee learned what Cornhusker opponents have learned throughout Osborne's tenure as head coach: he is an offensive genius.

"I guess the style of offense we play, it's a little bit of a shell game. They take one thing away, and we go to another thing," he said. "I think we got them off-balance and wore them down. It's a physical style of football, just knocking people down. Eventually that takes a toll."

"I think as the game went along, that became the real factor."

That analysis fit a majority of Osborne's 255 victories over the last 25 seasons. ■

SCORING SUMMARY

1st QUARTER

NEBRASKA

Ahman Green 1-yard run

Kris Brown kick

The Drive: 8 plays, 78 yards, 3:34

Key Plays: Following Mike Rucker's fumble recovery (caused by a vicious cross-body tackle on Tennessee's **Jamal Lewis** by **Ralph Brown**) the Huskers took over at their own 22 with 4:44 remaining in the first quarter. **Scott Frost** caught the Vols napping as he spread the ball around through the air including a 25-yard pickup by **Sheldon Jackson** on third-and-5 and a 16-yarder to **Matt Davison** on second-and-13. **Bobby Newcombe**'s 22-yard reception brought the Huskers to the UT 13-yard line. Two **Shevin Wiggins** running plays later, **Ahman Green** dove in for the score from 1 yard out.

Huskers 7, Volunteers 0

2nd QUARTER

NEBRASKA

Wiggins 10-yard run

Brown kick

The Drive: 3 plays, 15 yards, 1:07

Key Plays: Tennessee's **Terry Fair** muffed a **Jesse Kosch** punt at his own 15-yard line, and **Lance Brown** recovered. NU accounted for 10 yards on the ground behind fullback **Joel Makovicka** (7 yards) and Green (3), before Wiggins took a deep hand-off on an end-around for 10 yards and the score.

Huskers 14, Volunteers 0

TENNESSEE

Jeff Hall 44-yard field goal

The Drive: 7 plays, 35 yards, 2:52

Key Plays: Tennessee answered Brown's kick by moving the ball behind **Peyton Manning**'s passing and the ground work of Lewis. On third-and-6 from the NU 30, Manning hit **Jeremaine Copeland** at the NU 27, but before he could turn upfield, **Mike Brown** drove him to the field. Needing points, not heroics, the Vols settled for three points.

Huskers 14, Volunteers 3

3rd QUARTER

NEBRASKA

Frost 1-yard run

Brown kick

The Drive: 6 plays, 73 yards, 2:53

Key Plays: Nebraska opened the second half by establishing the run. Other than a 6-yard pass from Frost to Green (second play of the drive), the Huskers kept the ball on the ground and mainly in Green's capable hands. The Orange Bowl MVP accounted for 30 yards on six carries, but it was Makovicka who busted loose for the longest play when he picked up 24 yards from the NU 35 on a sore hamstring. On the fourth play from inside the UT 13, Frost scored up the middle.

Huskers 21, Volunteers 3

NEBRASKA

Frost 11-yard run

Brown kick

The Drive: 6 plays, 73 yards, 2:53

Key Plays: After holding the Vols to a three and out series following the Frost score, the Huskers took over at their 35 following a 43-yard **Chris Hogue** punt. The Vols started to look tired on defense and a couple of lazy arm tackles weren't enough to bring down Green, who followed an **Aaron Taylor** pancake around the left side for 43 yards. Frost also faced little resistance when he broke loose on a keeper on first-and-10 at the UT

11. The constant pounding had many of the Vols bent over holding their knees. Nebraska's coaches were also quick to pick up on this.

Huskers 28, Volunteers 3

TENNESSEE

Peerless Price 5-yard pass from Manning Manning two-point conversion failed

The Drive: 9 plays, 72 yards, 3:09

Key Plays: **Marcus Nash** caught the first two passes on the drive for 4 and 20 yards. Following a 6-yard rush by Lewis on first-and-10, Manning saw two straight passes dropped by Nash and Copeland. The Vols finally got an offensive break when they converted on fourth-and-4 with a 5-yard reception by Copeland. A couple more Lewis rushes set up the Price touchdown.

Huskers 28, Volunteers 9

NEBRASKA

Green 22-yard run

Brown kick

The Drive: 4 plays, 80 yards, 1:29

Key Plays: Tennessee looked beaten physically and mentally by the time Nebraska began its drive from its own 20 with 1:58 remaining in the third quarter. Green took his first hand-off 47 yards. Makovicka continued to pound the Vols' softening middle with an 8-yard carry from the UT 33. Green did the rest with a 3-yarder that set up his 22-yard scoring romp around the right side.

Huskers 35, Volunteers 9

4th QUARTER

NEBRASKA

Frost 9-yard run

Brown kick

The Drive: 9 plays, 66 yards, 3:53

Key Plays: Frost wanted to atone for his fumble (an errant pitch to Green) on the previous series when the Huskers got the ball back with 8:17 remaining in the game. It proved to be not only a clock-killing drive, but a national championship drive. Green, Makovicka and Newcombe continued to chew up big yards on the ground. The Huskers caught a break when Makovicka was stripped of the ball by **Al Wilson** on the UT 12. While many Vols dove for the ball, it was offensive right tackle **Eric Anderson** who came off the bottom of the pile with the ball. Frost wasted little time taking the ensuing snap up the middle for the Huskers' final score.

Huskers 42, Volunteers 9

TENNESSEE

Andy McCullough 3-yard pass from Tee Martin

Travis Stephens two-point catch

The Drive: 8 plays, 80 yards, 3:26

Key Plays: With the celebration on the Nebraska sideline in high gear and Manning, helmet off, watching the JumboTron, the Vols mounted one last shot at narrowing the gap. The highly recruited Martin took over the offense, following a touchback, and drove the Vols to a garbage score that only the bookies (and the few Tennessee fans still in the stadium) cared about. Martin showed he will be a force to be reckoned with in the Southeastern Conference next year, as he completed 4-of-4 passes for 53 yards against a Blackshirt defense that had one eye on its assignment and another watching its All-Americans **Jason Peter** and **Grant Wistrom** sneaking up on Tom Osborne with a barrel of water.

Huskers 42, Volunteers 17

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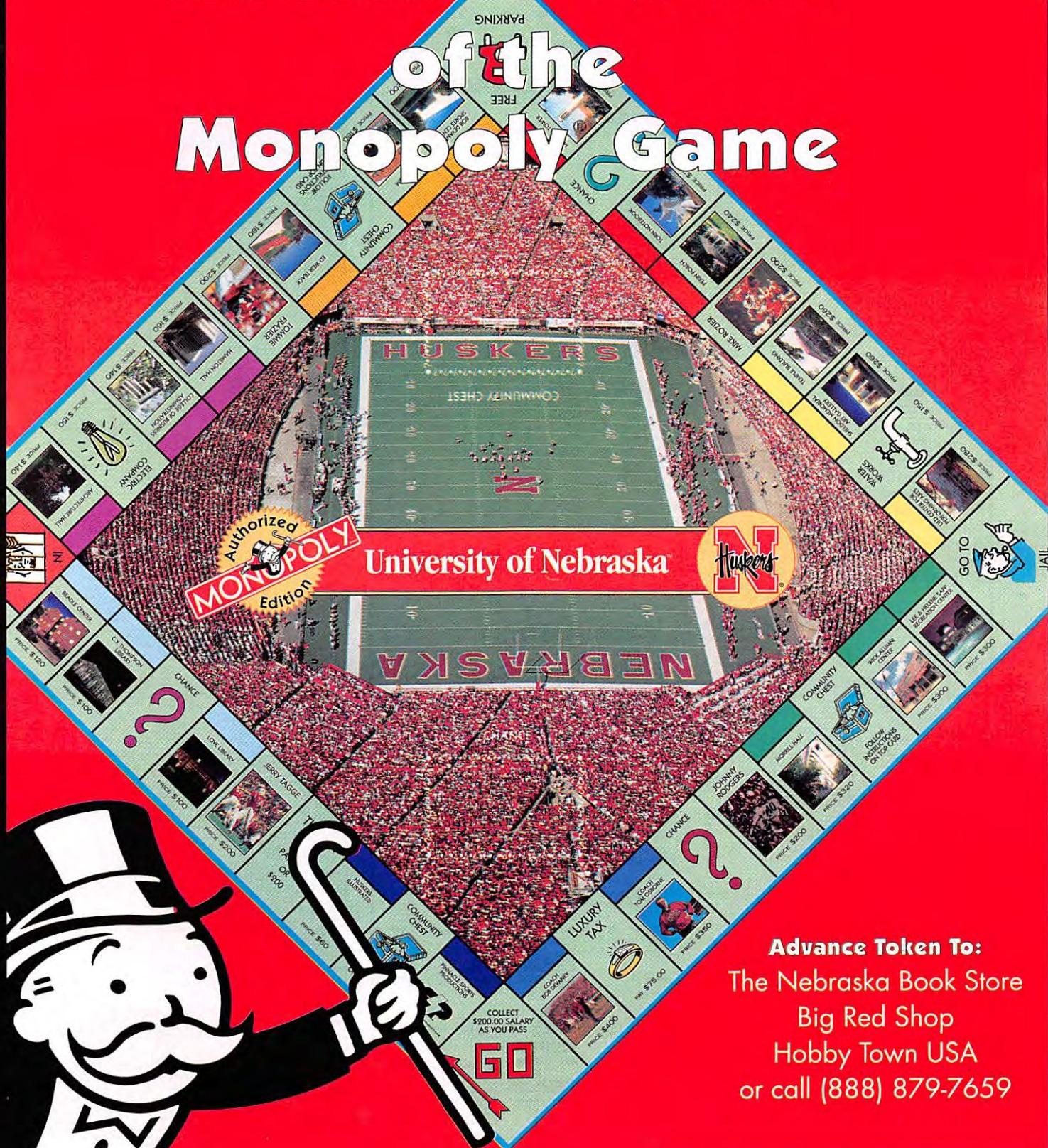
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JANUARY 2, 1998

STATISTICS
VS. TENNESSEE

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Attendance: 72,385



SCORE BY QUARTERS

TEAM	1	2	3	4	Final
Tennessee	0	3	6	8	17
Nebraska	7	7	21	7	42

TEAM STATS

	UT	NU
First Downs	16	30
Rushing	6	22
Passing	9	7
Penalty	1	1
Rushing Attempts	21	68
Yards Gained Rushing	139	427
Yards Lost Rushing	11	18
Net Yards Rushing	128	409
Net Yards Passing	187	125
Passes Attempted	35	12
Passes Completed	25	9
Had Intercepted	1	0
Total Plays	56	80
Total Net Yards	315	534
Avg. Gain Per Play	5.6	6.7
Fumbles-Lost	2-2	3-2
Penalties-Yards	5-37	8-63
Punts-Yards	6-314	4-156
Avg. Per Punt	52.3	39.0
Punt Returns-Yards	2-(4)	3-31
Interceptions-Yards	0-0	1-28
Fumble Returns-Yards	0-0	0-0
Kickoff Returns-Yards	5-94	1-29
Possession Time	23:57	36:03
Third-Down Conv.	2-10	4-10
Fourth-Down Conv.	1-1	1-2
Sacks By-Yards	0-0	1-9

DEFENSIVE LEADERS

NEBRASKA
Player
Peter, J.
Swiney, E.
Brown, M.
Ortiz, T.
Foreman, J.
Warfield, E.
Rucker, M.
McFarlin, O.
Harrison, B.
Wistrom, G.
Walker, J.
Warren, S.
Fischer, C.
Johnson, E.
Legate, B.
Brown, R.
Finley, C.
Buckhalter, C.
Kelsay, C.
Polk, C.
Player
Noel, T.
Thompson, R.
Gaines, C.
Wilson, A.
Fair, T.
Griffin, G.
Grant, D.
Little, L.
Coleman, J.
Walker, D.
Hampton, A.
Brown, J.
Hayden, J.
Green, R.
Buxton, B.
Duff, B.
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Wilson

Ahman Green was seen on the lot of a Lincoln automobile dealer a couple of days after Nebraska's Orange Bowl victory against Tennessee. The sighting was news in the *Lincoln Journal Star* and the *Omaha World-Herald*; Green was shopping for an automobile, they concluded.

One story noted the dealer sold, among others, Mercedes Benz automobiles.

"To get that straight, I didn't buy anything," Green said at a news conference in the South Stadium varsity lounge two days after the sighting. "I was just there, you know . . . what's it hurt to browse?"

And, he added with a smile, "to get that little sweet taste in my mouth."

The sweet taste to which Green referred was figurative. It meant the feeling people get when they have the wherewithal not only to browse but to purchase a Mercedes, if that's their desire.

Green figures to have that wherewithal come spring and the National Football League draft.

Less than a week after rushing for 206 yards and two touchdowns to earn the award as the most valuable Cornhusker in the Orange Bowl game, Green announced he was bypassing his senior season of eligibility and declaring for the draft. He made the decision after much deliberation, he said.

In addition to his own feelings, he considered "what my family thought about it, what my coaches thought about it, what some of my friends on the team, my teammates thought about it," Green said. "Then I put all that together. Most of it was all the same, basically saying the decision's up to me."

"I've got to make the decision for my own life, for my own career."

What has become the final season of his Cornhusker career was easily his best. Green rushed for 1,877 yards and 22 touchdowns, earning first-team All-Big 12 recognition.

The 1,877 yards were the second-most in a season in Nebraska history, behind Heisman Trophy winner Mike Rozier's 2,148 in 1983. Green also is second to Rozier on the Cornhuskers'

If he had remained healthy, Green probably would have eclipsed Mike Rozier's rushing and scoring records next season.

career rushing list, with 3,888 yards in three seasons. Rozier rushed for 4,780 yards in three seasons at Nebraska.

Had Green returned for his senior season and remained healthy, he likely would have passed Rozier on the all-time list, both for rushing yards and for rushing touchdowns.

He also would have been among the leading candidates for the Heisman Trophy.

Green considered those things in making his decision. "I thought about it," he said. "I kind of looked at it like, that might be me. Maybe I want to come back and do those things."

"But people know I'm not really a guy interested in awards, accolades. I just come out here and get the job done on the football field and the practice field. If I would have come back,

Green and his fiance, Shalynn Vance, plan to marry in June. They have an 8-month-old daughter, Ahmani. Shalynn and Ahmani were with several family members who attended the news conference.

Green, who was scheduled to leave for San Diego to prepare for the NFL scouting combine at Indianapolis in February, said he had received indications from an NFL committee set up to provide limited draft information to college underclassmen that he could be drafted in the first three rounds.

According to figures released by the NFL Players Association, the average salary for last year's first-round draft picks was \$1.1 million. For second-round picks, the average was just over \$500,000.

"I got a whole bunch of different

Greener Pastures

Ahman Green leaves the fields of Nebraska a year early to pursue his dream of playing in the NFL

that would not be a factor, to win the Heisman. What would have been a factor is to win another national title, win one for Coach (Frank) Solich his first year. That would have been one of my reasons to come back."

There were more compelling reasons to leave for the NFL, however.

Green's dream since he was a youngster has been to play professional football. "Since I was a little kid, a little toddler, all I could think about was playing for an NFL team somewhere," he said.

"For some people, it helps them staying . . . it doesn't really hurt them. Some people, it hurts staying another year. For me, I feel I should go. I would like to start my life right away with my family."

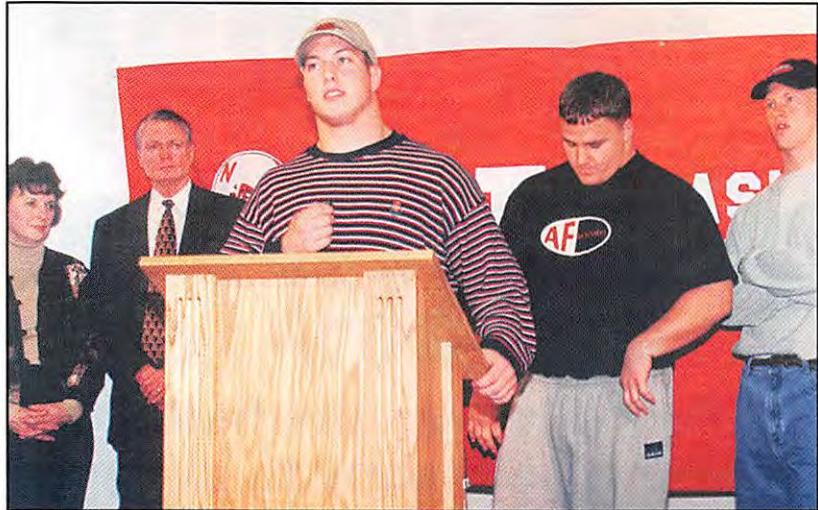
views," Green said. "They said late first round, early second round, or third round — anywhere around there. It's not a guarantee, just predictions. Nothing's guaranteed."

He was willing to guarantee that he would return to Nebraska to complete a degree, however.

"I will be back," said Green, a geography major. "You'll see my face here in a couple of years. I only have three full semesters to complete, so I'm basically halfway there. I want to make it clear that no matter what happens in the NFL, I will be back to get my degree and graduate as soon as I can."

Tom Osborne and Solich were attending the American Football Coaches Association convention in See GREEN page 79

BEST AND WORST OF '97



All retirement photos/Michael Warren

"Essentially, at this time, obviously, I'm going to step aside . . ."

The words didn't come easily for Tom Osborne, who needed news conferences on consecutive days to announce his decision to retire after 25 seasons as Nebraska's head coach.

At the first news conference, which was primarily to discuss the Orange Bowl game, Osborne said he tried to do "kind of a soft-shoe with you a little bit in preparing you."

Presumably, he also was preparing himself for what was to come. For the record, the date was Dec. 10, 1997, a little after 3 p.m., in the South Stadium varsity lounge. It marked the end of an era.

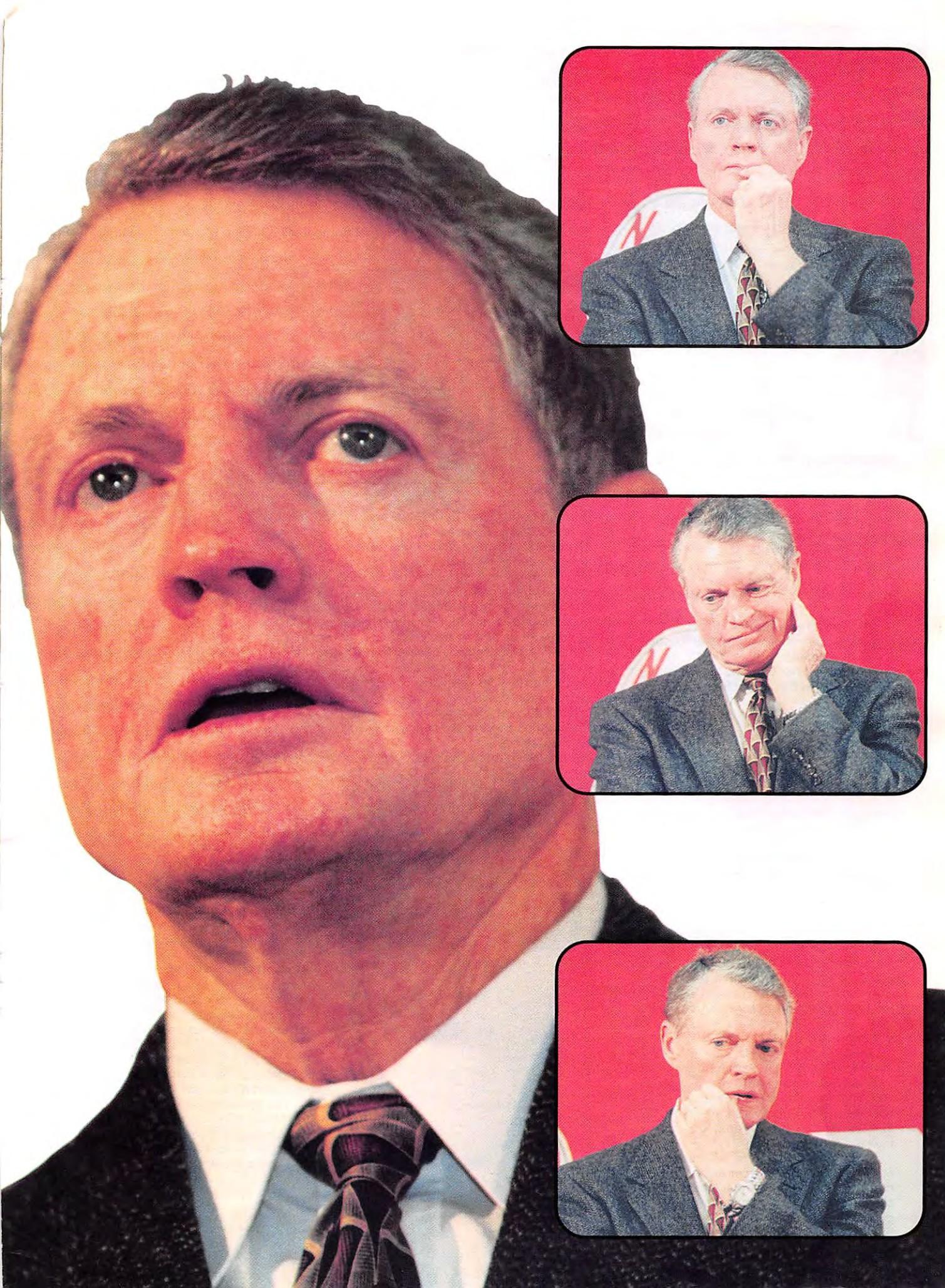
Though Osborne's retirement didn't become official until the new year, it represents the worst — and, perhaps, in a way the best — of Nebraska football for 1997.

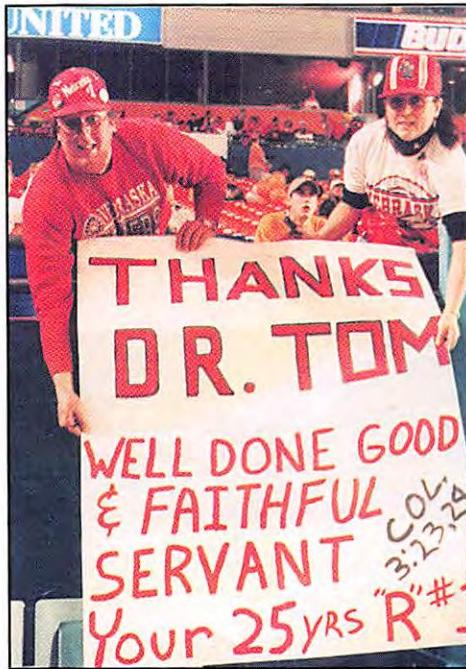
The worst part is obvious. The best coach in Cornhusker history has said goodbye, before his time, really. Osborne, who will celebrate his 61st birthday in February, is at the top of his profession and has shown no signs of losing touch with the game he understands and loves.

But his health was a consideration in his decision, as were personal commitments probably not well understood by most people. Osborne could have continued. But at what price?

The best part is that Osborne is going out on top, pretty much on his own terms. Few who have achieved his success know, or are willing to admit, that there is an appropriate time to step aside.

We might not agree that he has come to such a time, for our own selfish reasons. But we should be thankful to have been witness to the greatest era in Cornhusker football history.





NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Memorial Stadium is home to the best college football fans in the country. Nebraska's continuing record of 220 consecutive sellouts there should be evidence enough.

In case it isn't enough, however, senior rush end **Grant Wistrom** offered this after playing his last game there, a 77-14 victory against Iowa State: "Our crowd is the best in the country."

"You can't really say enough good things about them. It's definitely going to be one of the things I'm really going to miss about playing here, just the 'love you' feel from the crowd when you're on the field, the thrill you can get bringing 75,000 people to their feet just by waving your arms up in the air."

The Cornhuskers were 25-0 at Memorial Stadium during Wistrom's four seasons, extending their victory string at home to 42. "It's a pretty amazing streak," Wistrom said.

Jon Waller



NEBRASKA'S NO. 1 NEWS STORY

Tom Osborne's decision to retire was the No. 1 news story in the state for 1997, according to The Associated Press' annual survey of Nebraska print and broadcast affiliates.

The United States Department of Agriculture's recall of millions of pounds of frozen hamburger processed at plants in Nebraska, and the resulting economic impact on the state, was a close second to Osborne's retirement on the AP list. The death of former Cornhusker football coach and athletic director **Bob Devaney** was No. 6 on the list. Devaney died in May, at the age of 82.

OOPS . . .

Quoting from "State of the Huskers" in the April issue of **Huskers Illustrated**:

"There was a time, not long ago, when a popular diversion among Nebraska fans was speculating on which of Osborne's assistants would eventually succeed him as head coach. With each season, it becomes apparent that only the youngest could hope for such an opportunity. Even with high-powered binoculars, you might not be able to see Osborne's retirement from here . . . Osborne is a coach. That is what he does. And it is who he is. Age can't change that. His years are little more than adjectives."

"He's a 60-year-old coach now. He'll become a 61-year-old coach next February."

We only wish that were true.

RODNEY DANGERFIELD, WOULD YOU BELIEVE?

You have to question the intelligence of those misguided few in the student section who booed **Scott Frost**'s return with 3:58 remaining in the first half of the Central Florida game.

The senior from Wood River, Neb., turned in a season's performance that ranks among the best by a quarterback in Cornhusker history. He became one of only 10 quarterbacks in NCAA Division I to rush and pass for 1,000 yards in a season. He was the first Nebraska quarterback to rush for 1,000 yards in a season. And his 2,332 yards of total offense were one short of the school record.

Jerry Tagge set the record in 1971 with 2,333 total yards, 2,019 of them by passing.

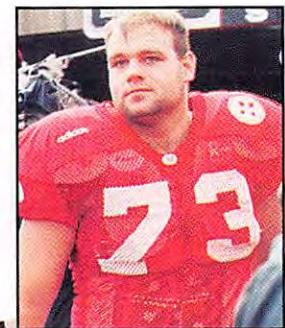
Frost also set a school single-season record for rushing touchdowns by a quarterback with 19. Yet, he was third-team All-Big 12 according to the conference coaches. Go figure.

His 4,210 yards of total offense rank seventh on Nebraska's career list, and everyone ahead of him played at least three seasons. What's a guy have to do to get some respect?

REFRESHING CANDOR

In the midst of a rambling answer to a question during an interview, senior offensive tackle **Fred Pollack** stopped abruptly to consider what he was saying.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I have no idea where I'm going with this."



Jon Waller

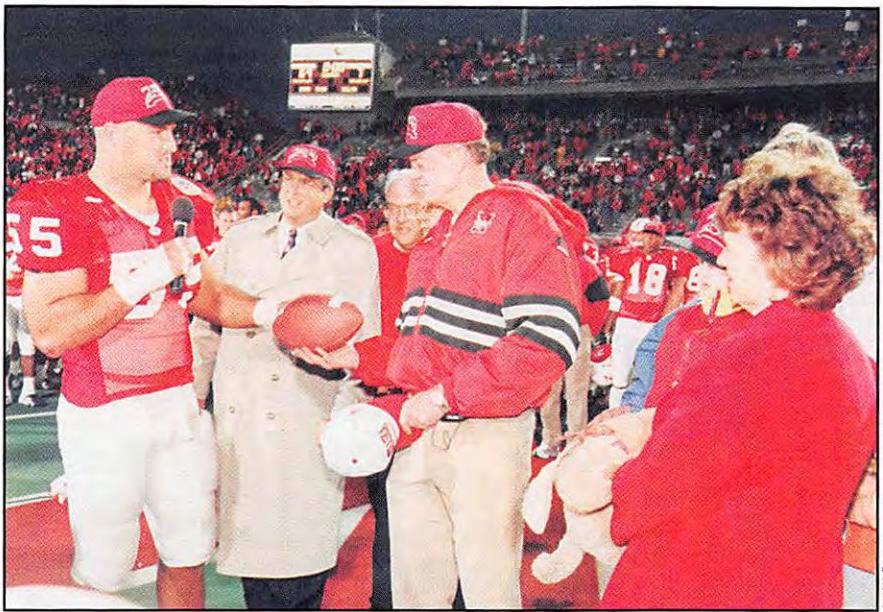


SCARED OF WHO?

Before the Colorado game, Frost was asked during a teleconference if he were scared of **Ryan Leaf**. The reporter meant Buff defensive back **Ryan Black**, who had suggested prior to the season that Nebraska should be afraid to play the Buffaloes in Boulder.

"Scared of Ryan Leaf?" Frost said, repeating the question regarding Washington State's quarterback. "Is he coming to Lincoln to beat me up or something? What do you mean, am I scared of Ryan Leaf?"

The confusion was quickly cleared up. "Ryan Black . . . yeah, Ryan Black. I'm rooting for Ryan Leaf," an amused Frost said before answering the question about Black's preseason remarks.

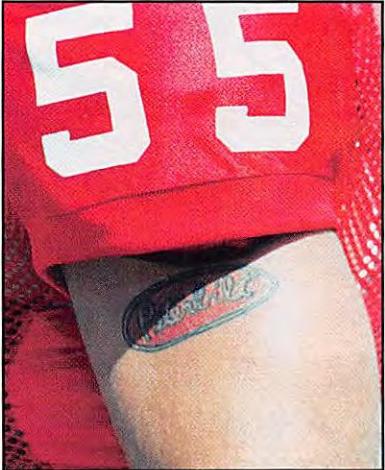


OKLAHOMA . . . NOT OK

In 1978, Osborne considered leaving Nebraska to become the head coach at Colorado. His interest in the job was, in part, a result of the pressure of losing the first five games he coached against Big Eight rival Oklahoma. His first victory against the Sooners came in 1978, 17-14. He was given little opportunity to enjoy that victory, however, because of a rematch in the Orange Bowl won by Oklahoma.

But all things change in time. Osborne's 250th coaching victory came at the Sooners' expense, 69-7, at Memorial Stadium, extending Osborne's winning streak against Oklahoma to seven. Osborne coached victories in nine of his last 10 games against the Sooners to even his record against them (13-13).

He had a winning record against the other schools in the former Big Eight: Colorado, 21-3-1; Iowa State, 22-3; Kansas, 25-0; Kansas State, 25-0; Missouri, 21-4; Oklahoma State, 23-0-1.

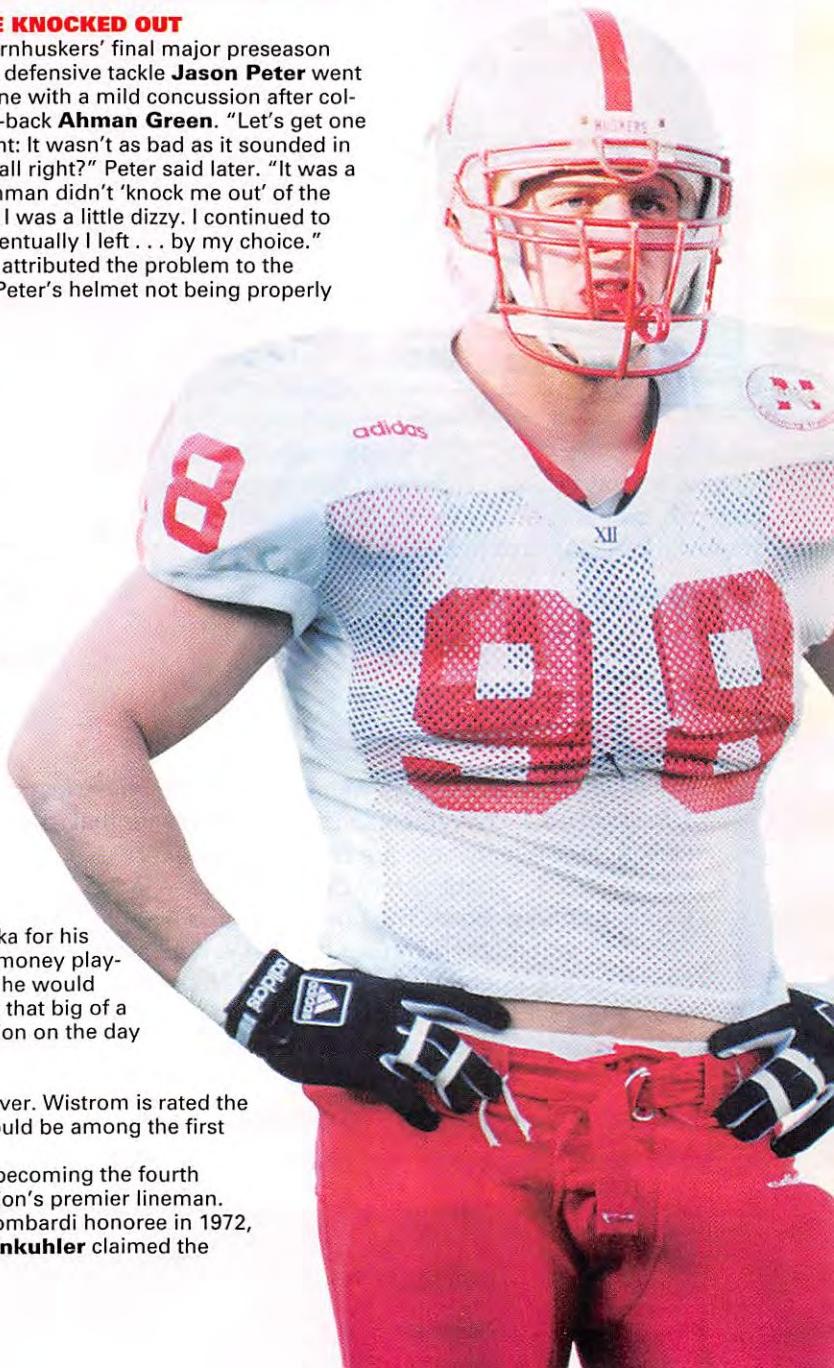


Jon Waller

NOT QUITE KNOCKED OUT

In the Cornhuskers' final major preseason scrimmage, defensive tackle **Jason Peter** went to the sideline with a mild concussion after colliding with I-back **Ahman Green**. "Let's get one thing straight: It wasn't as bad as it sounded in the papers, all right?" Peter said later. "It was a collision. Ahman didn't 'knock me out' of the scrimmage. I was a little dizzy. I continued to play. But eventually I left . . . by my choice."

Osborne attributed the problem to the padding in Peter's helmet not being properly inflated.



JUST WALK AWAY

Wistrom did a "Squash the Anger" promotional spot for the NCAA in which he encouraged young people to walk away from trouble. The All-American practiced what he preached at a Lincoln pizzeria and bar, when he interceded in an argument involving a female who was with him and a male patron.

His effort to solve the dispute peaceably resulted in his getting a black eye and a cut lip. He didn't retaliate, however, which is why his assailant was able to walk out instead of being carried out.

Witnesses confirmed that Wistrom showed remarkable restraint.

TO STAY OR GO?

Wistrom went against the norm and stayed at Nebraska for his senior season, passing up an opportunity to make good money playing in the National Football League. The consensus was, he would have been a late first-round draft pick. But "money is not that big of a thing for me right now," he said in announcing his decision on the day before the deadline to declare for the draft.

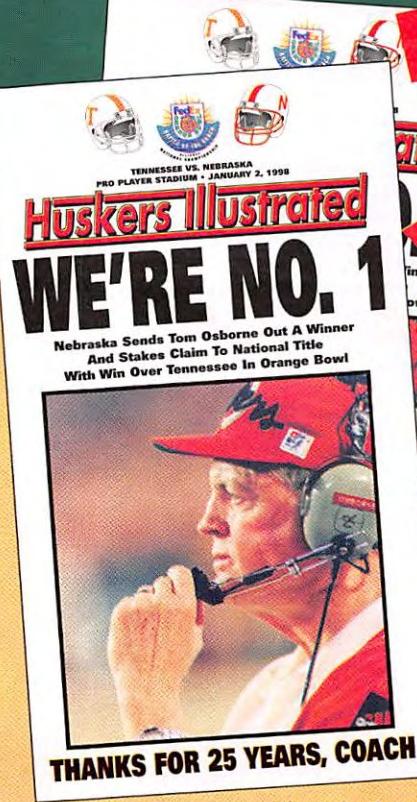
"That's not the reason I play football right now."

It'll be the reason he plays football next season, however. Wistrom is rated the best available at his position in the draft and very well could be among the first half-dozen picks.

Wistrom benefited from a fourth season at Nebraska becoming the fourth Cornhusker to win the Lombardi Award, given to the nation's premier lineman. Defensive lineman **Rich Glover** was the Huskers' first Lombardi honoree in 1972, and offensive linemen **Dave Rimington** and **Dean Steinkuhler** claimed the award in successive years in 1982 and 1983.

Huskers Illustrated

PRESENTS



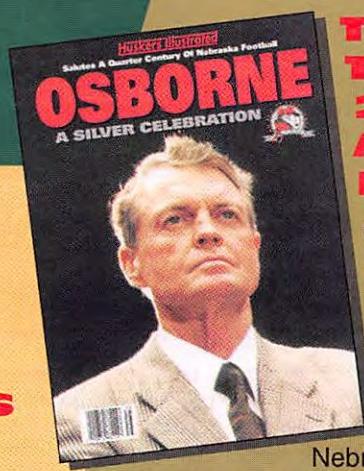
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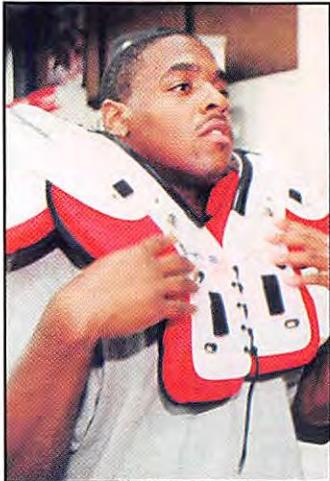
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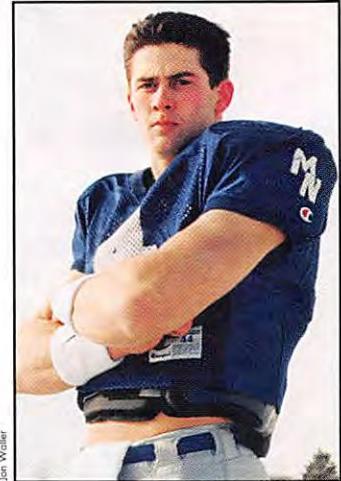
OUT BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Osborne became perturbed about constant questions regarding whether sophomore I-back **DeAngelo Evans** (left) would be redshirted. Evans suffered from a groin-related injury and was never able to return to practice on a consistent basis, much less at full-speed — so he was, in fact, redshirted. His return to health would be a blessing for **Frank Solich**'s first season as head coach.

Among others who might have faded into injury obscurity in 1997 were redshirted freshman wingback **John Gibson**, who suffered a severely torn anterior cruciate ligament, and true freshman quarterback **Eric Crouch** (right), who underwent surgery on both legs after the decision was made to red-shirt him.

The operations were on his right ankle and his left knee.

Crouch returned to practice in mid-November, working with the scout team. "Now that I've gone through all this, I can say that it helped me out a lot," Crouch told the *Omaha World-Herald*. "I've had a lot of mixed emotions. But playing on the scout team is great experience."



FRESH FACES

Most of the true freshmen, like Crouch, were redshirted. But six contributed this season: **Bobby Newcombe**, defensive backs **Erwin Swiney** (right) and **Joe Walker**, I-back **Correll Buckhalter**, rush end **Kyle Vanden Bosch** and split end **Matt Davison**, who led the team in receiving yards with 232 on 11 catches.

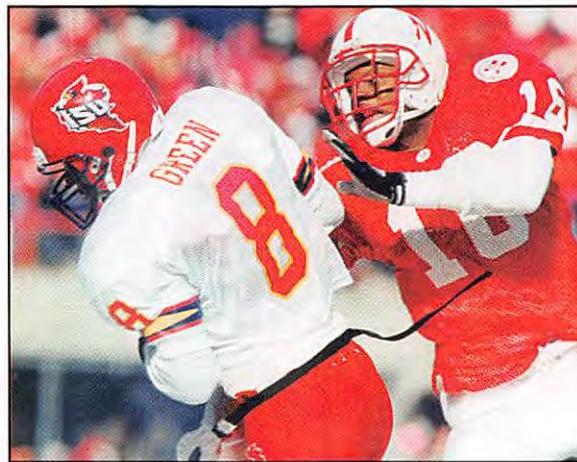
Swiney started the Kansas State game at left cornerback and never relinquished the job.

"Quite frankly, he's the second-best corner we have," said defensive backs coach **George Darlington**. "Regardless of the reasons, Swiney has separated from the other players."

The Cornhuskers' best corner was, of course, sophomore **Ralph Brown**.

Vanden Bosch quickly learned to beware of **Charlie McBride**.

"I think he just likes to give me a hard time," Vanden Bosch said of the veteran defensive coordinator. "Sometimes, I don't know whether to laugh or to kind of keep a straight face."



Jon Waller

WHERE WILL BOBBY BE?

First, he's a quarterback. Then, he's a wingback. And next season, he'll be a ...

Newcombe was every bit as good as everyone expected him to be when he announced his intention, in the middle of the summer, to play for the Cornhuskers.

The true freshman from Albuquerque, N.M., began the season as a kick returner and backup quarterback and ended it in the regular rotation at wingback in addition to returning kicks. He was adept enough at both to earn comparisons to **Johnny Rodgers**, Nebraska's first Heisman Trophy winner.

Newcombe took his first snap at quarterback with 12:47 remaining in the opener against Akron. The play was supposed to be a pass, but he turned the wrong way and had to scramble. "It's not the ideal thing to go out and scramble to make something happen," said quarterbacks coach **Turner Gill**.

Still, the scramble showed Newcombe's athleticism. He gained 22 yards.

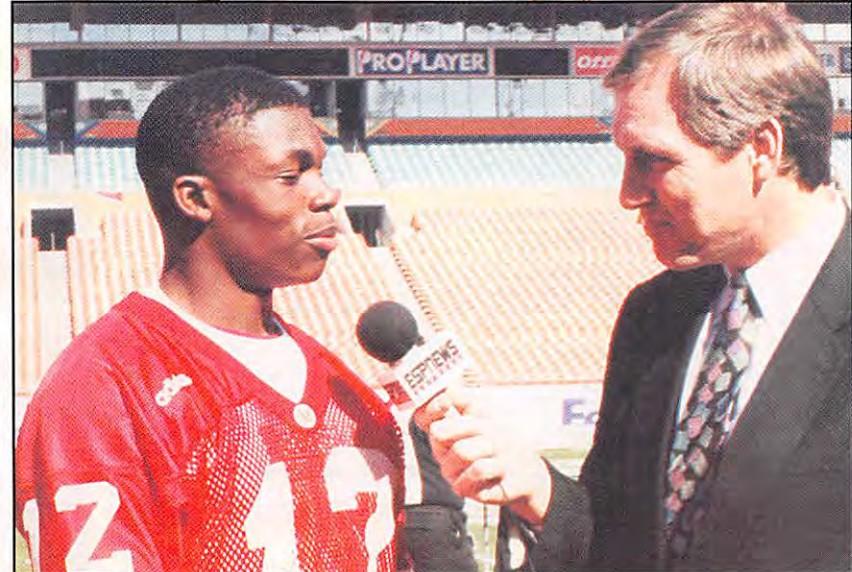
During the off-week after the Washington game, Newcombe was moved to wingback for the remainder of the season. "We don't want to waste a year of his eligibility," Osborne explained.

Newcombe was quick to earn the respect of his teammates. "Bobby's a play-maker," junior fullback **Joel Makovicka** said. "He's really come along and started to learn the offense and just get real confident in his abilities. It took him a few games to get where he needed to learn the offense and really get in there."

"I think you saw that . . . the Oklahoma game was kind of his coming-out party."

Among other things, Newcombe scored his first collegiate touchdown, on a 40-yard pass play from Scott Frost. He also made a punt return reminiscent of those by Rodgers. Newcombe would have gone 84 yards for a touchdown if he hadn't stumbled. The return was still good for 57 yards.

Newcombe has left no doubt about his desire to play quarterback in the spring.



Scott Smith

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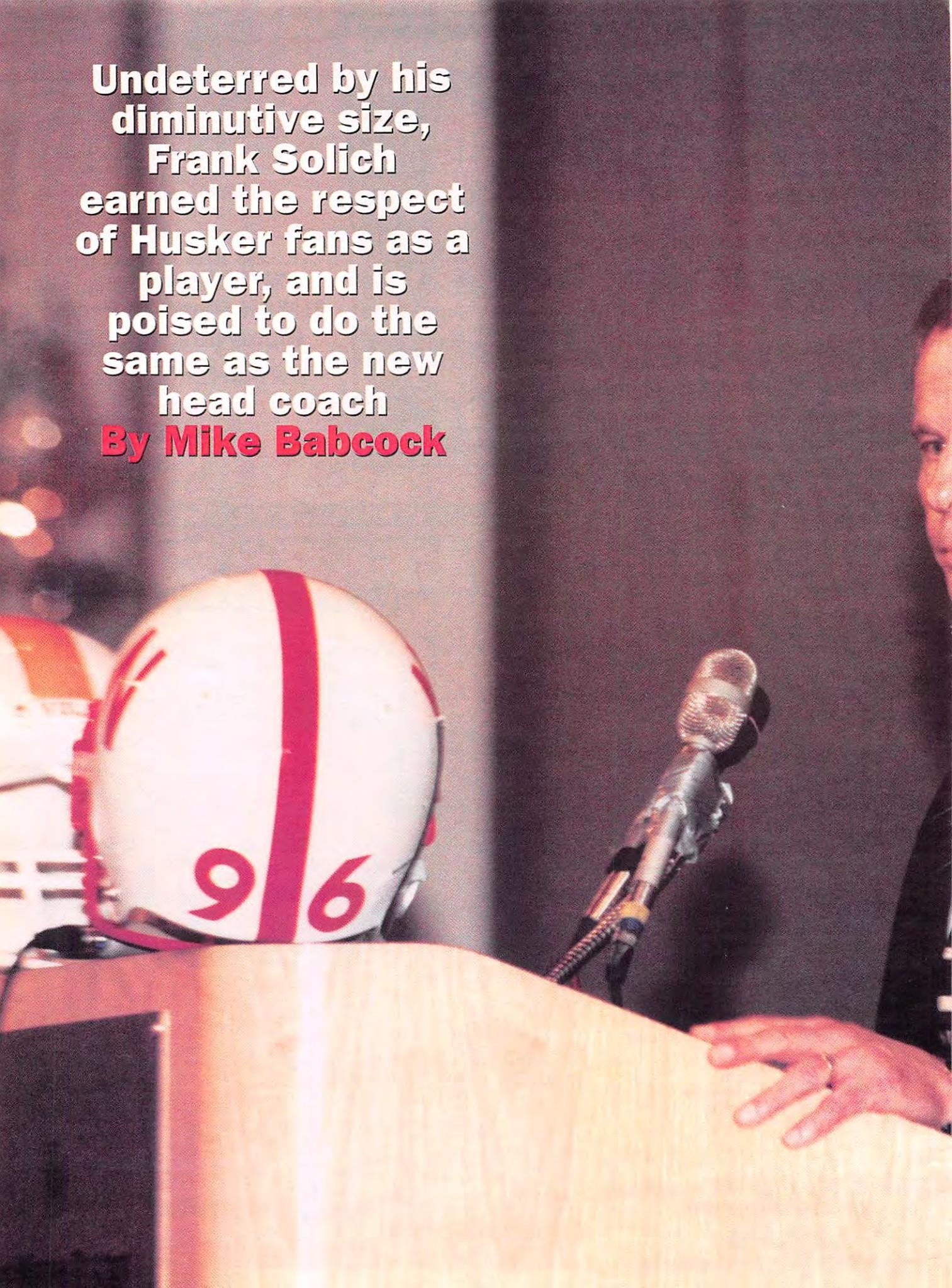
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**Undeterred by his
diminutive size,
Frank Solich
earned the respect
of Husker fans as a
player, and is
poised to do the
same as the new
head coach**

By Mike Babcock

LITTLE BIG MAN



TRAFFIC WAS backed up for more than a mile on the highway from Denver.

The jam-up was a result, in part, of recent flooding, which had knocked out a bridge. It was also a result of interest in Nebraska's No. 2-ranked football team, which was playing the Air Force Academy.

An estimated 3,000 of the 37,056 who attended the game missed the first quarter.

Nebraska scored on its three first-quarter possessions, and by the time those final 3,000 spectators had settled into their seats, the Cornhuskers led, 21-0, on the way to a 27-17 victory.

The date was Sept. 25, 1965. (More about the game in a minute.) The victory was one of 10 for Nebraska that season. With an 11th, against Alabama in the Orange Bowl, the Cornhuskers would have given Bob Devaney his first national championship. Bear Bryant's Crimson Tide was too quick for Nebraska, however, and won the game and the title, 39-28.

Afterward, Bryant crossed the field at the Orange Bowl stadium to shake hands not only with Devaney, but also with one of Devaney's senior co-captains — Frank Solich.

Even though Solich spent most of the second half of the game on the sideline because of a nagging knee injury suffered late in the season, Bryant wanted to show his respect. Such was the reputation Solich had earned. It was a singular event in his distinguished collegiate career.

So was the Air Force game. Solich rushed for 204 yards and three touchdowns to lead the Cornhuskers to victory — and establish records that have yet to be broken.

No other Nebraska fullback has rushed for 200 yards in a game. And no Nebraska fullback has rushed for more than three touchdowns in a game. Joel Makovicka tied the latter record this season, with touchdown runs of 5, 37 and 32 yards in the 69-7 victory against Oklahoma.

Solich's performance was slightly more dramatic. The first of his three touchdowns against Air Force came on an 80-yard run on the first play from scrimmage. His second came on a 21-yard run in the final minute of the first quarter. And his third came early in the third quarter, after, well . . .

Air Force had cut the deficit to 21-17. Nebraska lined up to go for a first down on fourth-and-2 at the Air Force 41-yard line. An overeager defensive lineman jumped offsides, and the Falcon defense relaxed, anticipating an official's whistle. However, Cornhusker quarterback Bob Churchich took the snap and handed the ball to Solich, who bolted, untouched, 41 yards for touchdown No. 3.

The play was characteristic of Solich, who always has made the most of his opportunities. That's how he excelled as a major college fullback, despite weighing less than 160 pounds. And that's why he should be well-prepared for the seemingly impossible task of succeeding Tom Osborne.

Solich always has battled the odds and won. He was a longshot to play at Nebraska, much less become a first-team All-Big Eight fullback as a senior. The Cornhuskers offered him a scholarship mostly because

they were interested in one of his high school teammates, Mike Worley.

NCAA scholarship limits were considerably more generous in 1962, which meant "we could take as many players as we wanted," Devaney once said in explaining Solich's recruitment. The plan was to use Solich primarily as a kick returner and, possibly, as a fullback in the spread formation.

Solich, a tailback at Holy Name High in Cleveland, Ohio, drew recruiting interest from other colleges, among them Iowa State, Northwestern, the Naval Academy, Kent State and Notre Dame.

Ohio State, however — the preference of most high school football players in Ohio — didn't offer a scholarship. "If you weren't a 200-pound back, they weren't interested," Solich has said.

"I didn't have the size to play there.

we're never going to win a game."

Nebraska won 29 of 33 games and three Big Eight championships during Solich's three varsity seasons. He was used primarily as a kick returner as a sophomore. He suffered a broken ankle in the second game of the season at Minnesota but returned for the final three games, including the Orange Bowl.

The Cornhuskers defeated Auburn, 13-7, on New Year's Day on the strength of a record 68-yard touchdown run by quarterback Dennis Claridge and two field goals by Dave Theisen.

Solich returned a punt for what appeared to be 80 yards and a touchdown in the first quarter, only to have an

black lung disease from working in the mines, the family moved to Cleveland, where his dad got a job in a Ford automotive stamping plant.

St. Ignatius Elementary School in Cleveland required some adjustment. Where he had gone to school "might have been more than one room, but if it was, one was a closet," Solich has said.

He played baseball as well as foot-



William Lauer



Bob Berry

The Cornhuskers' running backs coach since 1983, Solich was hand-picked by Osborne to succeed him because of his unique perspective on the program's past and present.

I was in a situation where a lot of schools questioned my size to play major college football. They weren't exactly beating a path to my door."

Worley, a fullback in high school, was a little taller and a lot heavier than Solich.

Osborne, a Cornhusker graduate assistant at the time, has recalled jokingly: "I thought: 'If we're not recruiting guys any bigger than these two,

official rule that he had stepped out of bounds at the Nebraska 42-yard line. "Husker fans still debate the issue," sports information director Don Bryant wrote a year later.

Even if it had stood up, the return wouldn't have been the longest of Solich's career, however. He returned a kick 89 yards for a touchdown in a 27-14 victory against Oklahoma State in 1964.

After his junior season, Solich underwent shoulder surgery. It was never easy.

Solich grew up in Smokeless, Pa., a small coal-mining community near Johnstown, about 60 miles from Pittsburgh. When his dad contracted

ball in high school and doubled at Nebraska for a time. Solich was good enough to attract recruiting attention for football. But he picked the Cornhuskers mostly because of their interest in Worley — the two talked about going to school together.

"It wasn't like a player now, going to Nebraska because of its reputation," Solich has said.

He didn't plan to become a coach when he arrived at Nebraska. "When I was playing, I never thought that much ahead. I just kind of took it as it came," he said after becoming Nebraska's running backs coach in 1983. "But later in my college career, I started looking more at the coaching

aspect."

Immediately after graduating, he was hired as the head football coach at Holy Name High School in Omaha, where he spent two seasons. In 1968, at age 23, he became the youngest head football coach in Nebraska's large-schools classification, moving to Southeast High in Lincoln.

The Knights were 1-8 his first season, 5-4 the second, 7-1-1 the third and 7-2 the fourth. He coached 11 seasons at Southeast, winning Class A state championships in 1976 and 1977.

His experience at Southeast, as well as at Holy Name, helped shape his coaching philosophy, said Solich, whose predecessor as the Knights' head coach was Bill Stephenson.

"Sometimes you worry about the (former) head coach remaining in the building, but Bill was tremendous and never interfered," Solich has said. "And then there were people on the staff, such as Wally McNaught, who were great to me. At that point in time, I felt Wally was a mentor to me, with his coaching style, his coaching techniques, how he handled kids, his personality. I've always been around good, positive people in my coaching career. I think that's been a big plus for me."

After 13 high school seasons, Solich was interested in moving to the next level but didn't know how to go about it. Osborne took care of that, offering him a job as freshman coach in 1979.

His Cornhusker freshman teams were 19-1 in four seasons.

Solich became a full-time assistant in charge of the running backs after Mike Corgan retired, and he was given the title of assistant head coach in 1991, after turning down an offer to become assistant head coach and offensive coordinator for former Nebraska teammate Barry Alvarez at Wisconsin.

Solich was the first assistant he tried to hire after becoming the coach at Wisconsin, Alvarez recently told the *Omaha World-Herald*. "Frank is very sincere, very loyal," Alvarez said.

The loyalty that kept him at Nebraska has been repaid in Osborne's support. "Frank has known that he would be the guy," Osborne said on the day he announced he was stepping down.

The other assistants also have known Osborne's choice of successors.

"I think they've been in a climate where it was understood that Frank would be the guy, for quite a long

See SOLICH page 78

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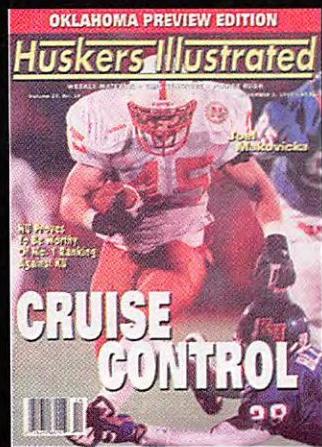
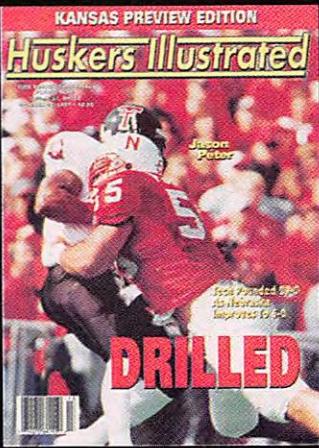
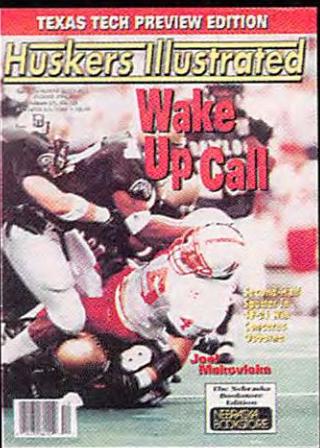
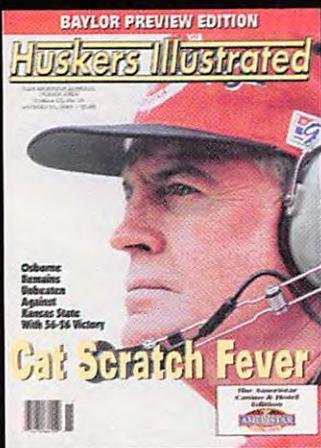
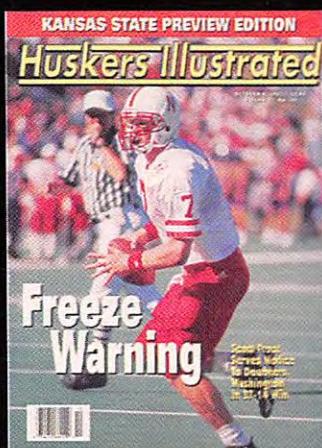
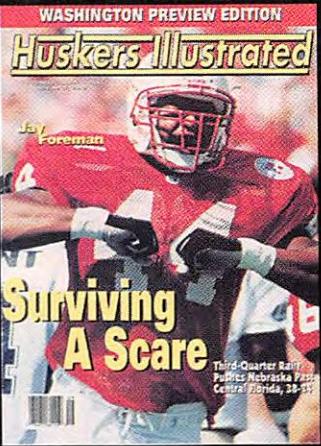
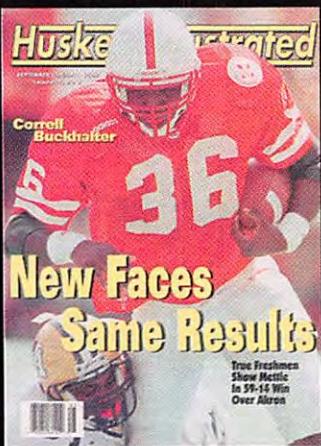
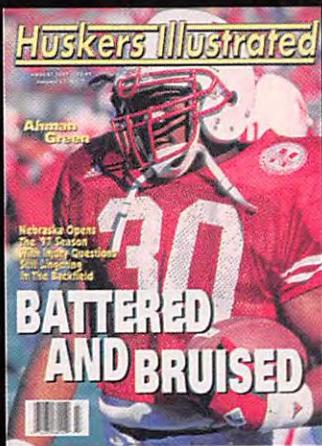
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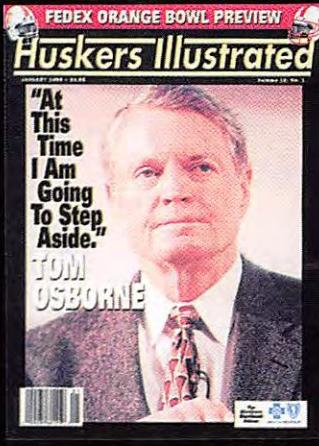
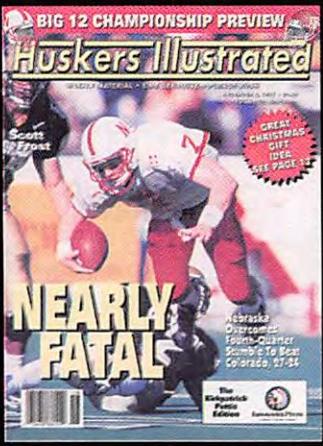
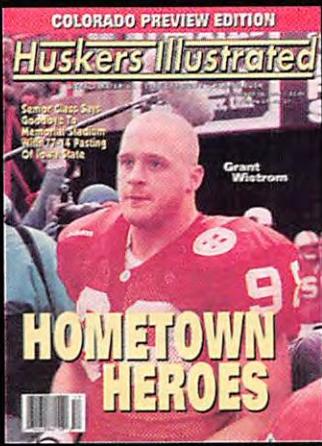
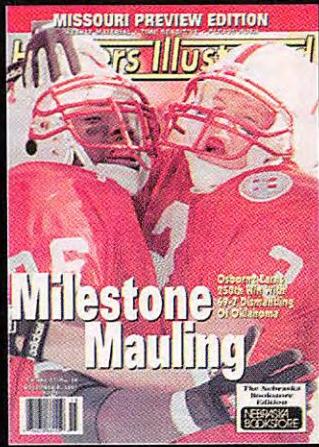
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THE SEASON IN REVIEW



GAME 1 • AUGUST 30, 1997

Nebraska 59, Akron 14

Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb. • Attendance: 75,124

The Nebraska Cornhuskers opened what turned out to be head coach Tom Osborne's final season with a 59-14 thrashing of Akron. The Akron athletic department received \$450,000 to send its team to Lincoln for the afternoon of abuse.

The Huskers were missing several projected starters because of injuries, and starting I-back Ahman Green left the game early when his back tightened up. But Nebraska still administered a beating on the undermanned Zips.

Before he left the game to receive medical attention, Green carried the ball nine times for 99 yards and a pair of touchdowns, and quarterback Scott Frost rushed 11 times for 123 yards and a pair of scores of his own. Frost also was 7-of-13 for 67 yards passing.

The Huskers, who piled up 644 yards on the day, held the Zips to just 243 total yards of offense.

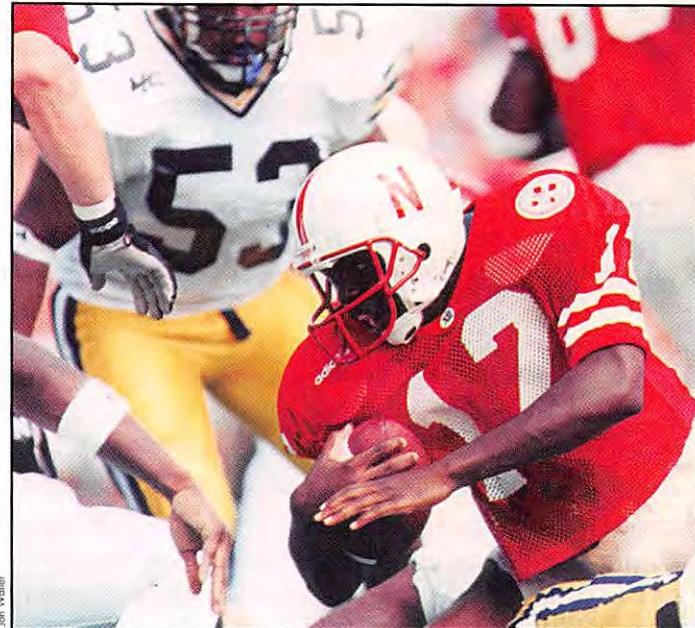
After the game, Akron coach Lee Owens pointed out the obvious. "Seeing this up close and personal," Owens said, "I have not seen a better football team than Nebraska."

The blowout allowed the Nebraska coaching staff to get a look at several key backups, including reserve quarterbacks Frankie London and true freshman Bobby Newcombe. London averaged almost 16 yards per carry (79 yards on just five carries) and completed 4-of-5 passes for a team-high 90 yards through the air.

Newcombe, in his Husker debut, ran the ball seven times for 32 yards, and completed his only pass attempt for 15 yards.

Newcombe's first play at quarterback was supposed to be a pass, but he turned the wrong way after taking the snap, and after realizing he had "messed up," scrambled for 22 yards.

Newcombe was "a little nervous," NU quarterbacks coach Turner Gill said. "I guess that shows you a little bit of the talent he has, that he can make something happen. Sometimes, it's going to work. Sometimes it's not going to work."



With the starters heading to the sideline in the first half of the Akron rout, freshmen like Bobby Newcombe were able to make their debuts.

London, who was the Huskers' fifth-string quarterback a year ago and did not travel with the team, admitted after the game that last season he had considered transferring from Nebraska to another school.

"I felt I was really just out there as a practice player in 1996," London said. "When someone makes up their mind they're going to be around, they're going to be here, they might as well make the best of it

and get the job done, leave no questions to be asked. Right now, that's what I'm trying to focus on. I think I'm a lot better quarterback. I'm just trying to play the backup role and be ready when the time comes." ■

SCORE BY QUARTERS					
TEAM	1	2	3	4	Final
Akron	0	0	7	7	14
Nebraska	14	24	14	7	59

TEAM STATISTICS		INDIVIDUAL LEADERS						FIELD GOALS						
		RUSHING						NEBRASKA						
FIRST DOWNS	AU	NU	Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP	Name	No.	Vds.	YPC	TDs	LP
By Rushing	4	21	Frost, S.	11	123	11.2	2	26	Spencer, W.	4	43	10.8	0	14
By Passing	5	8	Green, A.	9	99	11.0	2	45	Bailey, L.	1	69	69.0	1	69
By Penalty	2	1	London, F.	5	79	15.8	0	51						
NET YARDS RUSHING	99	472	Buckhalter, C.	11	61	5.5	2	17						
Attempts	41	56	Makovicka, J.	7	59	8.4	2	20						
Gained	120	478	Newcombe, B.	7	32	4.6	0	22						
Lost	21	6												
Yards Per Rush	2.4	8.4												
NET YARDS PASSING	144	172												
Attempts	14	19												
Completed	8	12												
Percent Completed	57.1	63.2												
Had Intercepted	1	0												
TOTAL OFFENSE	243	644												
Total Plays	55	75												
FUMBLES	1	4												
Fumbles Lost	0	1												
PENALTIES	5	5												
Yards Penalized	35	60												
PUNTS	8	0												
Punting Yards	401	0												
Average Per Punt	50.1	0.0												
PUNT RETURNS	0	7												
Return Yards	0	145												
KICKOFF RETURNS	2	2												
Return Yards	36	41												
POSSESSION TIME	31:03	28:57												
SACKS BY	0	0												
Yards	0	0												

Join the Team!

Help the Nebraska Alumni Association achieve what Coach Tom Osborne has achieved on the field: #1 in the Nation!

It may come as a surprise, but currently the Nebraska Alumni Association ranks a dismal 74th in the nation when measured against the membership percentages of its peer alumni associations. This statistic is unacceptable to the alumni and friends of the university who aspire to see Nebraska on top of all polls - academic, athletic, and alumni. The challenge is for each of us to recruit and solicit memberships from alumni and friends we know who are not members but want to support the university. "There is no place like Nebraska" is more than a fight song: It's a call to action!

If each current member of the Nebraska Alumni Association made it a priority to recruit one friend to join the association this year, we would move from the bottom quartile to the top quartile of associations, rank first in the Big 12 and land solidly in the top 10 in the nation in alumni membership. This type of membership ranking will elevate the prestige and reputation of the university just as it has done at Kansas, Penn State, Ohio State, and Michigan. We must not accept anything less than striving to be the best alumni association in the nation.

We cannot achieve our goals without your help. Renew your membership, get another Husker to become a member, and put Nebraska and the alumni association near the top of your list of priorities. Help us become #1 not only in athletics but in all we do. Let's all be Husker Proud!



Dear Husker Fan:

Truly great universities are measured not only by the strength of their athletic and academic programs, but also by the depth of their alumni support. With this in mind, the Nebraska Alumni Association has kicked off a membership campaign aimed at making it the #1 alumni association in the country; and I hope we can count on you.

Membership entitles you to the quarterly Nebraska Magazine, invitations to chapter events, discounts on exclusive Husker merchandise and much more.

More important than these benefits, however, is the fact that your membership indicates your ongoing pride in, and support of, the University of Nebraska. If the muscle of a university is athletics and its brain is academics, then alumni and friends have to be considered its very heart and soul.

I encourage you to help the Nebraska Alumni Association reach its goal by calling 402-472-2841 and joining today. Thanks for your support.

Sincerely,

Tom Osborne

Coach Tom Osborne
Alumni Association Member

P.S.: You don't have to be a graduate of the university to be an association member.

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GAME 2 • SEPTEMBER 13, 1997

Nebraska 38, Central Florida 24

Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb. • Attendance: 75,327

With one of the best (albeit least-known) players in the country in quarterback Daunte Culpepper, the Central Florida Golden Knights stood toe-to-toe with the Huskers and fought to the end of Nebraska's 38-24 win.

The Nebraska offense did not put up the dominant offensive statistical numbers often associated with the Big Red Machine. After sitting out a series in favor of backup Frankie London, quarterback Scott Frost returned to the game late in the first half and was greeted with a chorus of boos — a reaction that infuriated NU head coach Tom Osborne.

"I didn't like that," Osborne said after the game. "I don't think that has any place in this stadium, to boo a player who's playing well. I don't think that's even in the realm of what's practical."

When he got his chance, London excelled, leading the Huskers on an eight-play, 65-yard scoring drive, which he capped with an 8-yard touchdown run.

"We're not demoting Scott Frost," Osborne said. "We're putting in Frankie London because we want him to play when the game is tight. We run option football. We do a lot of things with the quarterback, and we feel it's very important that Frankie at least feels fairly confident that if he has to go in and shoulder the whole load that he can do it."

"Right now, Scott Frost is our starter. He's our best quarterback because of experience, because of knowing what to do."

Junior I-back Ahman Green led the Huskers with 113 yards rushing on 25 carries, and Frost completed 9-of-14 passes for 120 yards and a touchdown (to tight end Sheldon Jackson).

Questions were raised about the Blackshirt defense and the young Nebraska secondary, as Culpepper completed 24-of-31 passes for 318 yards and a touchdown. He also ran for 34 yards and a score.

NU defensive coordinator Charlie McBride said UCF's impressive offensive numbers were less an indictment of



Green had 113 yards rushing against UCF, his first of 12 straight games with at least 100 yards.

the Blackshirts' effectiveness, and more a reflection of Culpepper's considerable talent.

"I said last week this quarterback's pretty good, that he'll be a high draft choice. He'll be a player in the NFL," McBride said. But McBride also admitted that "when you get 300 yards thrown against you, it's not good."

But most of the talk after the game centered around the fans' treatment of Frost.

"The thing Scott Frost has done well is, he's kept his head up with a tremendous amount of criticism," Osborne said. "I don't understand some of it, but we're going to do what we have to do to win football games." ■

TEAM	SCORE BY QUARTERS				Final	
	1	2	3	4		
UCF	7	10	0	7	—	24
Nebraska	0	14	17	7	—	38

TEAM STATISTICS

	UCF	NU
FIRST DOWNS	14	30
By Rushing	4	20
By Passing	10	8
By Penalty	0	2
NET YARDS RUSHING	47	364
Attempts	26	65
Gained	84	379
Lost	37	15
Yards Per Rush	1.8	5.6
NET YARDS PASSING	318	150
Attempts	35	15
Completed	24	10
Percent Completed	68.6	66.7
Had Intercepted	1	0
TOTAL OFFENSE	365	514
Total Plays	61	80
FUMBLES	2	4
Fumbles Lost	1	2
PENALTIES	7	1
Yards Penalized	35	5
POINTS	6	3
Punting Yardage	258	97
Average Per Punt	43.0	32.3
PUNT RETURNS	1	3
Return Yardage	{2}	8
KICKOFF RETURNS	0	4
Return Yardage	0	108
POSSESSION TIME	26:10	33:50
SACKS BY	1	3
Yards	5	21

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

NEBRASKA					
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Green, A.	25	113	4.5	0	14
Buckhalter, C.	11	82	7.5	2	23
Makovicka, J.	11	68	6.2	0	23
Frost, S.	10	52	5.2	1	17
London, F.	2	16	8.0	1	8
Legate, B.	2	12	6.0	0	8

CENTRAL FLORIDA					
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Culpepper, D.	13	34	2.6	1	23
Grant, M.	12	17	1.4	1	9
Burley, S.	1	4	4.0	0	4

PASSING

NEBRASKA					
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs	
Frost, S.	9-14-0	1	120	1	
London, F.	1-1-0	0	30	0	

CENTRAL FLORIDA					
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs	
Culpepper, D.	24-35-1	3	318	1	

RECEIVING

NEBRASKA					
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Jackson, S.	3	61	20.3	1	33
Cheatham, K.	2	36	18.0	0	30

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Nonsant, M.	7	174	24.9	0	44
Burley, S.	7	76	10.9	0	25

FIELD GOALS

NEBRASKA					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
Brown, K.	1-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0

CENTRAL FLORIDA					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
Waczewski, F.	0-0	0-0	1-1	0-0	51

DEFENSE

NEBRASKA

Name	UT	AT	TT	TF/Yds	Int/Yds	S/Yds
Brown, M.	6	3	9	1-2	0-0	0-0
Peterson, J.	6	0	6	0-0	1-0	0-0
Warfield, E.	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0-0
Kelsay, C.	1	4	5	2-3	0-0	0-0
McFarlin, O.	1	4	5	0-0	0-0	0-0
Shaw, B.	3	1	4	2-5	0-0	0-0
Rucker, M.	3	1	4	1-2	0-0	0-0
Peter, J.	2	2	4	3-11	0-0	1.5-9
Wiltz, J.	2	2	4	2-3	0-0	0-0

CENTRAL FLORIDA

Name	UT	AT	TT	TF/Yds	Int/Yds	S/Yds
Washington, D.	11	4	15	0-0	0-0	0-0
Devine, D.	6	6	12	2-3	0-0	0-0
Green, E.	4	6	10	1-2	0-0	0-0
Benoit, J.	3	7	10	0-0	0-0	0-0

GAME 3 • SEPTEMBER 20, 1997

Nebraska 27, Washington 14

Husky Stadium • Seattle, Wash. • Attendance: 74,023

In a game many called the Cornhuskers' biggest of the season, quarterback Scott Frost silenced any critics who doubted his ability to direct the Husker option offense against the Washington defense, which entered the game ranked first in the country against the run.

Frost ran for 97 yards (on 18 carries) and a pair of touchdowns to lead Nebraska past the then-No. 2 Huskies, 27-14, in Seattle. I-back Ahman Green and fullback Joel Makovicka each ran for 129 yards, and Green also scored once for the Huskers before going to the sideline late in the game with a bruised shoulder.

But in addition to Frost, the biggest stars of the game were the Blackshirts, who sent Washington quarterback Brock Huard to the sideline in the second quarter with a severe ankle sprain after throwing for just 29 yards. The Cornhuskers also gave up just 43 yards rushing, including just 28 to the Huskies' star running back, Rashaan Shehee.

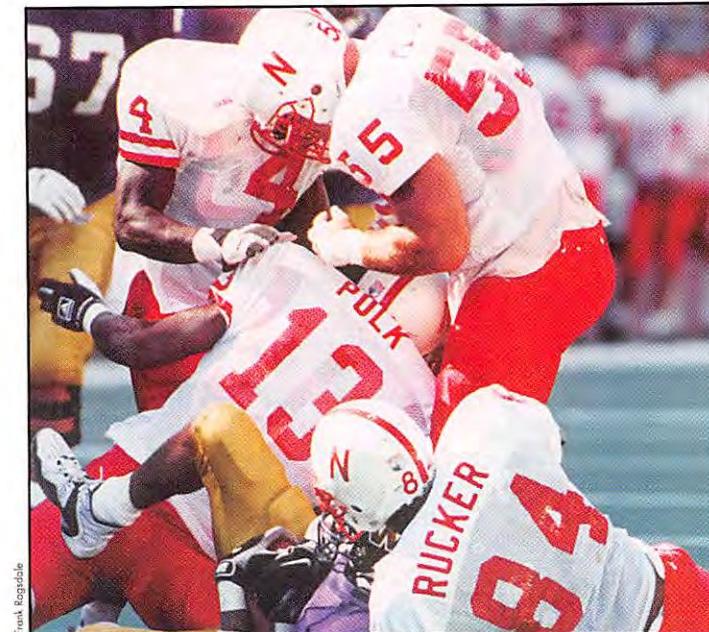
"The thing that takes a little luster off (the victory) is Huard getting hurt," Nebraska head coach Tom Osborne said after the game. "Obviously, he's a great player, but the freshman quarterback (Washington back-up quarterback Marques Tuiasosopo) came in and played awfully well."

Tuiasosopo completed 12-of-22 passes for 270 yards and two touchdowns. Split end Jerome Pathon was his prime target, hauling in five passes for 195 yards (averaging a staggering 39.0 yards per catch). The Huskers were prepared to face the drop-back passing of the left-handed Huard, not the mobility of Tuiasosopo.

"He did a great job coming in," Nebraska defensive coordinator Charlie McBride said of Tuiasosopo. "What happens, and what I was afraid of, is that the team picks it up a bit. They really fell in behind (Tuiasosopo)."

Frost's ability to take advantage of the dominance of the Nebraska offensive line helped turn him from a scapegoat in the eyes of some Husker fans into a legitimate candidate for postseason honors.

But Washington's passing success pointed to a need for



Frank Rossdale

Nebraska held the Huskies to 43 yards rushing, including just 28 by running back Rashaan Shehee.

better play in the Nebraska secondary.

"We have to develop those young guys in the secondary," McBride said. "We're at the point where we're a little afraid to play some of those guys against the great teams. You don't really want to test them against a great team like Washington."

If the Huskers' games with Akron and Central Florida had raised questions about whether the 1997 Blackshirts could de-

velop into a great defense, senior rush end Grant Wistrom said that the convincing performance against Washington squelched such talk.

"It's about time we showed it," Wistrom said. ■

SCORE BY QUARTERS					
TEAM	1	2	3	4	Final
Washington	0	7	7	0	— 14
Nebraska	14	7	0	6	— 27

TEAM STATISTICS

	UW	NU
FIRST DOWNS	14	23
By Rushing	4	20
By Passing	9	3
By Penalty	1	0
NET YARDS RUSHING	43	384
Attempts	28	66
Gained	69	407
Lost	26	23
Yards Per Rush	1.5	5.8
NET YARDS PASSING	299	88
Attempts	30	15
Completed	16	8
Percent Completed	53.3	53.3
Had Intercepted	0	0
TOTAL OFFENSE	342	472
Total Plays	58	81
FUMBLES	0	2
Fumbles Lost	0	0
PENALTIES	6	9
Yards Penalized	47	60
PUNTS	7	4
Punting Yards	244	169
Average Per Punt	34.9	42.3
PUNT RETURNS	1	0
Return Yards	10	0
KICKOFF RETURNS	4	2
Return Yards	99	39
POSSESSION TIME	25:29	34:31
SACKS BY	2	4
Yards	6	19

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	VPC	TDs	LP
Makovicka, J.	12	129	10.8	0	43
Green, A.	29	129	4.4	1	15
Frost, S.	18	97	5.4	2	34
Buckhalter, C.	5	34	6.8	0	25
WASHINGTON					
Name	Att.	Yds.	VPC	TDs	LP
Shehee, R.	11	28	2.5	0	12
Tuiasosopo, M.	11	12	1.1	0	14

PASSING

Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs
Frost, S.	8-15-0	1	88	0
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs
Tuiasosopo, M.	12-22-0	3	270	2
Huard, B.	4-8-0	1	29	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	VPC	TDs	LP
Brown, L.	2	38	19.0	0	35
Wiggins, S.	2	24	12.0	0	21
WASHINGTON					
Name	No.	Yds.	VPC	TDs	LP
Pathon, J.	5	195	39.0	0	54

Shehee, R.	4	18	4.5	0	8
Cleeland, C.	3	42	14.0	1	15

FIELD GOALS

NEBRASKA					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+ LK
Brown, K.	1-1	1-1	0-1	0-0	0-0 31
WASHINGTON					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+ LK
Jones, R.	0-0	0-1	0-0	0-0	0-0

DEFENSE

NEBRASKA					
Name	UT	AT	TT	TF/LYds	Int/Yds S/Vds
Foreman, J.	6	1	7	1-3	0-0
McFarlin, O.	3	3	6	0-0	0-0
Brown, M.	5	0	5	0-0	0-0
Kelsay, C.	3	1	4	1-7	0-0
Peter, J.	1	3	4	0-0	0-0
Rucker, M.	3	0	3	2-6	0-0
Wistrom, G.	3	0	3	0-0	0-0
Shaw, B.	2	1	3	0-0	0-0
Warfield, E.	2	0	2	0-0	0-0
WASHINGTON					
Name	UT	AT	TT	TF/LYds	Int/Yds S/Vds
Parish, T.	5	6	17	0-0	0-0
Burton, N.	5	6	11	0-0	0-0
Towns, L.	6	2	8	1-8	0-0
Hairston, M.	5	3	8	0-0	0-0
Campbell, C.	5	2	7	2-3	0-0
Jensen, J.	5	1	6	0-0	0-0

GAME 4 • OCTOBER 4, 1997

Nebraska 56, Kansas State 26

Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb. • Attendance: 75,856

This was supposed to be the year for Kansas State. After years of improvement, KSU fans began to wonder aloud if 1997 was the season in which their beloved Wildcats officially would join the ranks of the nation's elite teams by traveling to Lincoln and beating the mighty Nebraska Cornhuskers.

Those fans now are checking into asylums to deal with another year of Cornhusker-induced depression.

Junior I-back Ahman Green pounded away for 193 yards (on 20 carries), and became the first Nebraska player in two years to reach the end zone four times in a single game. Quarterback Scott Frost and senior I-back Jay Sims also ran for one touchdown apiece as the Huskers sent the Wildcats limping back to Manhattan, 56-26.

K-State still proved to be the second-best team in the Big 12, earning a Fiesta Bowl berth against Syracuse, but the Huskers proved there is an enormous chasm between the top two teams in the conference.

While the Huskers had been chided for opening the 1997 season against such football non-powers as Akron and Central Florida, KSU also had begun its season by clubbing a trio of Division I-A wannabes — Northern Illinois, Ohio and Bowling Green.

K-State quarterback Michael Bishop — who would end up the season by beating out Frost for second-team All-Big 12 honors — was thought to be the man who could lead the 'Cats past the Huskers. But when he went 24-0 as a starter in two years at Blinn (Texas) Junior College, he never encountered a defense that even resembled the Blackshirts.

He completed his first two passes, but did not complete another until the third quarter. He finished the day by hitting just 8-of-24 passes for 162 yards and a score, but he also served up a pair of interceptions, the second of which was returned 71 yards for a touchdown by true freshman cornerback Joe Walker.

Nebraska head coach Tom Osborne underscored the effectiveness of the Nebraska defense against the KSU aerial



Ahman Green became the first Cornhusker in two years to score four touchdowns in a single game.

attack. "I don't think their passing game hurt us that much," he said.

Meanwhile, Green credited the Nebraska offensive line for his banner day.

"The last few games have showed that once we get rolling, we're hard to stop," Green said. "I can't do it by myself. We're going to put it in there (the end zone), Ahman. They tell me that."

Cornhusker defensive tackle Jason Peter said that one factor in Nebraska's dominance of K-State was the history of Cornhusker routs over the Wildcats. "We're still Nebraska," Peter said, "and they're still Kansas State." ■

SCORE BY QUARTERS					
TEAM	1	2	3	4	Final
Kansas St.	6	0	6	14	26
Nebraska	10	10	21	15	56

TEAM STATISTICS		INDIVIDUAL LEADERS					
		RUSHING					
FIRST DOWNS	KSU	21	Name	NEBRASKA	Att.	Yds.	YPC
By Rushing	KSU	16	Green, A.	20	193	9.6	4
By Passing	KSU	7	Frost, S.	17	111	5.8	1
By Penalty	KSU	5	Newcombe, B.	1	25	25.0	0
NET YARDS RUSHING	KSU	379	Sims, J.	6	24	4.0	1
Attempts	KSU	40	Makovicka, J.	7	18	2.6	0
Gained	KSU	152	London, F.	3	12	4.0	0
Lost	KSU	54	Hickson, E.	21	83	4.0	2
Yards Per Rush	KSU	2.5	Bishop, M.	17	14	0.8	1
NET YARDS PASSING	KSU	94		KANSAS ST.	Att.	Yds.	YPC
Attempts	KSU	162			Sk	Tds	LP
Completed	KSU	24					
Percent Completed	KSU	14					
Had Intercepted	KSU	8					
Total Plays	KSU	33.3					
FUMBLES	KSU	2					
Fumbles Lost	KSU	1					
PENALTIES	KSU	4					
Yards Penalized	KSU	8					
PUNTS	KSU	35					
Punting Yards	KSU	362					
Average Per Punt	KSU	45.3					
PUNT RETURNS	KSU	4					
Return Yards	KSU	7					
KICKOFF RETURNS	KSU	10					
Return Yards	KSU	53					
POSSESSION TIME	KSU	4					
	KSU	2					
SACKS BY	KSU	114					
Yards	KSU	39					
	KSU	26:43					
	KSU	33:17					

FIELD GOALS							
NEBRASKA							
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP		
Burnett, E.	2	65	32.5	0	46		
KANSAS ST.							
McDonald, D.	2	63	31.5	1	42		
Peries, G.	2	29	14.5	0	18		
None attempted							
FIELD GOALS							
NEBRASKA							
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+	LK	
Brown, K.	0-0	2-2	0-0	0-0	0-0	32	
KANSAS ST.							
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+	LK	

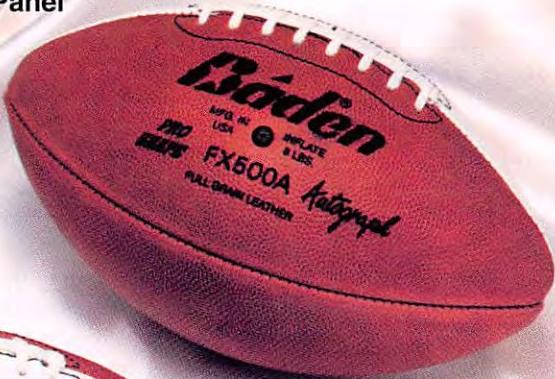
DEFENSE							
NEBRASKA							
Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Yds	Int/Yds	S/Yds	
Johnson, E.	2	5	7	.5-1	0.0	0.0	
Shaw, B.	3	2	5	1.5-18	0.0	0.0	
Warfield, E.	3	2	5	.50	1-26	0.0	
Vistrom, G.	2	3	5	2-3	0.0	0.0	
Foreman, J.	2	3	5	1-3	0.0	0.0	
Brown, M.	2	3	5	.50	0.0	0.0	
Swiney, E.	3	1	4	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Peter, J.	2	1	3	1.5-11	0.0	.52	
Rucker, M.	1	2	3	1-0	0.0	0.0	
KANSAS ST.							
Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Yds	Int/Yds	S/Yds	
Simoneau, M.	3	7	10	.5-1	0.0	0.0	
Cooper, J.	3	6	9	.5-5	0.0	0.0	
Clements, J.B.	2	7	9	.50	0.0	0.0	

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GAME 5 • OCTOBER 11, 1997

Nebraska 49, Baylor 21

Floyd Casey Stadium • Waco, Texas • Attendance: 38,175

That the Nebraska Cornhuskers scored seven touchdowns in their 49-21 victory over Baylor is remarkable.

Not because Baylor has a great defense, but simply because the Huskers were able to maintain their concentration for the whole game against an undermanned Baylor team.

I-back Ahman Green rushed 20 times for 158 yards, and for the second game in a row, the junior from Omaha scored four touchdowns. For all intents and purposes, the game was over by halftime, at which point the Cornhuskers led the Bears, 42-7.

Against a team with just 68 scholarship players, Nebraska head coach Tom Osborne substituted liberally, but he said he was upset that the second-string Huskers did not play better on the soggy field in Waco, Texas.

"We got a good chance to look at our second units," Osborne said. "I'm not looking for a big score. I'm just kind of upset about the fact that we didn't finish off well. Our second units usually play better than that. I didn't see what I'd like to see. We were just kind of disappointed in the execution. You like to see execution."

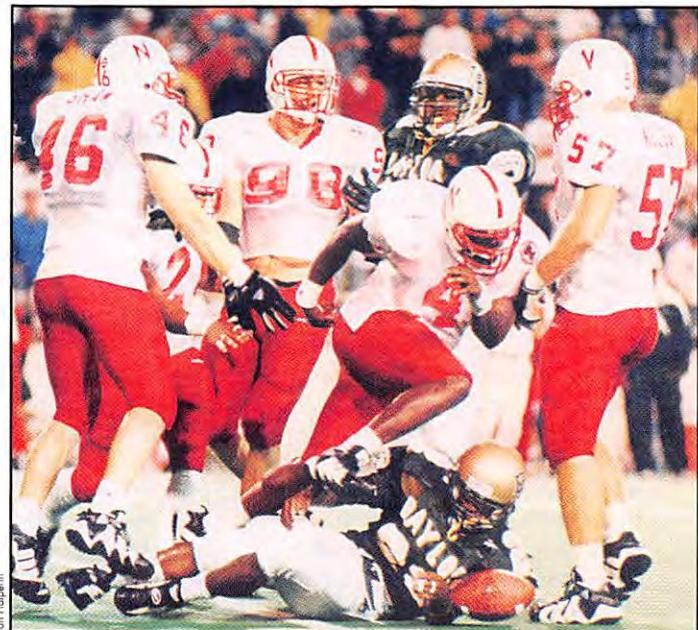
Green's performance — keep in mind he sat out much of the second half — had some mentioning him as a possible Heisman Trophy candidate.

Had he remained in the game, "Ahman would have had unbelievable numbers," assistant head coach Frank Solich said. "The Heisman Trophy will take care of itself. I don't really need to respond much to that."

Baylor head coach Dave Roberts said before the game that he "heard people talking about him for the Heisman Trophy. By next year, that may be a possibility." He didn't say after the game whether Green's performance had caused him to accelerate that prediction.

"I tell you what — he's a heck of a back," Nebraska senior guard Aaron Taylor said. "It's a lot of fun watching him run down the field."

The win, which pushed the Huskers' record to 5-0, fea-



The Blackshirts held Jerod Douglas, Baylor's second-leading career rusher, to 84 yards.

tured 103 yards in the air by Scott Frost, who also ran the ball for 71 yards and a score. Fullback Joel Makovicka and reserve I-back Jay Sims also scored for Nebraska.

The Bears managed just 203 yards of total offense for the afternoon. The Cornhuskers had over 500 of their eventual 543 yards of offense by the start of the second half.

The Bears should be relieved that Nebraska did not turn in its best performance of the season.

"I thought in the first two-and-a-half quarters, we played pretty well," Osborne said. Imagine the damage the Cornhuskers might have inflicted had they played well for the entire game. ■

SCORE BY QUARTERS					
TEAM	1	2	3	4	Final
Baylor	7	0	0	14	— 21
Nebraska	14	28	7	0	— 49

TEAM STATISTICS

	BU	NU
FIRST DOWNS	12	27
By Rushing	5	21
By Passing	3	4
By Penalty	4	2
NET YARDS RUSHING	137	410
Attempts	37	64
Gained	196	433
Lost	59	23
Yards Per Rush	3.7	6.4
NET YARDS PASSING	66	138
Attempts	19	17
Completed	7	8
Percent Completed	36.8	47.1
Had Interceptions	1	0
TOTAL OFFENSE	203	548
Total Plays	56	81
FUMBLES	2	5
Fumbles Lost	2	3
PENALTIES	5	8
Yards Penalized	51	90
PUNTS	9	1
Punting Yardage	351	40
Average Per Punt	39.0	40.0
PUNT RETURNS	0	7
Return Yardage	0	55
KICKOFF RETURNS	1	2
Return Yardage	15	76
POSSESSION TIME	27:21	32:39
SACKS BY	1	4
Yards	11	36

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

NEBRASKA				
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs
Green, A.	20	158	7.9	4
Frost, S.	12	71	5.9	1
Makovicka, J.	8	57	7.1	1
Buckholter, C.	7	51	7.3	0
Cobb, J.	2	18	9.0	0

BAYLOR				
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs
Douglas, J.	15	84	5.6	1
Bush, D.	9	74	8.2	1
Burkins, E.	6	11	1.8	0

PASSING

NEBRASKA				
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs
Frost, S.	58-0	1	103	0
London, F.	3-9-0	0	35	0

BAYLOR				
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs
Watson, J.	7-19-1	4	66	0

RECEIVING

NEBRASKA				
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs
Brown, L.	2	59	29.5	0
Jackson, S.	1	37	37.0	0
Cheatleham, K.	1	17	17.0	0

BAYLOR

Name	No.	Yds.	VPC	TDs	LP
Bush, D.	2	26	13.0	0	11
Coggill, M.	2	19	9.5	0	11
Simpkins, G.	2	17	8.5	0	12

FIELD GOALS

NEBRASKA					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
None attempted					LK

BAYLOR					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
None attempted					LK

DEFENSE

NEBRASKA					
Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Yds	Int/Yds
Johnson, E.	3	3	6	1-1	0-0
Ortiz, E.	3	2	5	2-8	0-0
Walker, J.	3	1	4	1-10	0-0
Vanden Bosch, K.	3	1	4	0-0	0-0
Polk, C.	1	3	4	0-0	0-0
Kelsay, C.	2	1	3	1-2	0-0
Brown, M.	1	2	3	0-0	0-0

BAYLOR					
Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Yds	Int/Yds
Codie, N.	8	2	10	0-0	0-0
Micheaux, K.	7	3	10	0-0	0-0
Anderson, M.	6	1	7	0-0	0-0
Cruse, C.	6	1	7	0-0	0-0

GAME 6 • OCTOBER 18, 1997

Nebraska 29, Texas Tech 0

Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb. • Attendance: 75,764

The Cornhuskers improved to 6-0 on the season with a 29-0 drubbing of Texas Tech in Lincoln. Coupled with last year's 49-0 annihilation of Baylor, Nebraska has posted consecutive shutouts on Homecoming Weekend.

"It feels good. It feels real good," NU defensive tackle Jason Peter said. "We've been hoping for a shutout all season. We're all happy with the way the defense played. It's a monkey off our backs. We got that shutout, and we feel good about it."

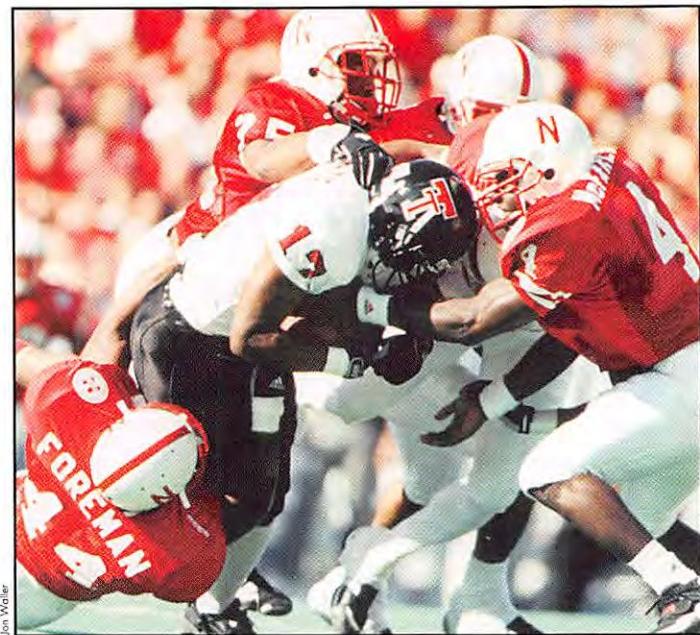
A year ago, in the Huskers' 24-10 victory over Tech in Lubbock, Texas, the Red Raiders mustered 102 yards rushing against the Blackshirts. With the majority of Tech's offense from the 1996 season — running back Byron Hanspard — now playing for the Atlanta Falcons, the Red Raiders were able to generate just 17 yards on the ground.

"There's not a whole lot to say when you get thoroughly manhandled," Texas Tech head coach Spike Dykes said. "I thought Nebraska's defense was relentless. We just had a hard time all day with our offense — we really did. Their defense was every bit as good as I thought they would be."

Hanspard's heir apparent at tailback, freshman Ricky Williams, picked up 37 yards on 11 carries, but he had little help. Meanwhile, Nebraska I-back Ahman Green piled up 178 yards and a touchdown on 24 carries for the Huskers, and quarterback Scott Frost also chipped in with 83 yards.

"We're obviously happy with the shutout," rush end Grant Wistrom said. "We've been close a couple of times this year, and if we'd left our top unit in like a lot of teams do, we probably would have had (more) shutouts. But the shutout today, I think, was due in large part to our offense."

That was because the Huskers' offense held on to the ball for over 13 minutes more than the Red Raiders could. "Any time your offense controls the ball that much, you're going to have a great opportunity to pitch a shutout," Wistrom said. "We came up with a couple of good defensive stands when we needed them. But I think most of the credit today has to go to the offense, in terms of



The Cornhuskers held Texas Tech scoreless for the Blackshirts' first shutout of the season.

the shutout."

Guard Aaron Taylor credited the defense. "We didn't execute real well, and that was kind of disappointing from the offensive standpoint," Taylor said. "But I'll tell you what — our defense hung in there and shut them down."

NU head coach Tom Osborne echoed Taylor's rave review of the Husker defense.

"I thought the defense did an outstanding job," he said. "Any time you don't let anybody score, you've had a great day. I think we've steadily decreased the number of big plays against us. The coverage was generally good. The pass rush was good. The run defense was solid, just fewer mistakes." ■

SCORE BY QUARTERS

TEAM	1	2	3	4	Final
Texas Tech	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	3	10	9	7	29

TEAM STATISTICS

	TT	NU
FIRST DOWNS	6	28
By Rushing	0	25
By Passing	6	2
By Penalty	0	1
NET YARDS RUSHING	17	400
Attempts	26	69
Gained	60	423
Lost	43	23
Yards Per Rush	.65	5.8
NET YARDS PASSING	110	46
Attempts	20	12
Completed	10	5
Percent Completed	50.0	41.7
Had Intercepted	0	1
TOTAL OFFENSE	127	446
Total Plays	46	81
FUMBLES	2	3
Fumbles Lost	0	1
PENALTIES	9	0
Yards Penalized	68	0
PUNTS	9	3
Punting Yards	354	153
Average Per Punt	39.3	51.0
PUNT RETURNS	0	4
Return Yards	0	8
KICKOFF RETURNS	3	1
Return Yards	28	27
POSSESSION TIME	23:25	36:35
SACKS BY	1	4
Yards	7	30

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

Name	NEBRASKA
Green, A.	24 178 7.4 1 24
Frost, S.	19 83 4.4 0 20
Makovicka, J.	9 57 6.3 0 13
London, F.	5 25 5.0 0 14
Alexander, D.	2 20 10.0 0 18
Sims, J.	4 18 4.5 0 9

Name	TEXAS TECH
Williams, R.	15 37 2.5 0 11
Ervin, A.	5 8 1.6 0 9
Peters, R.	1 .5 -.5 0 0

PASSING

Name	NEBRASKA
Frost, S.	5-12-1 Sk 46 TDs 1
Lehridge, Z.	10-20-0 Sk 110 TDs 0

Name	TEXAS TECH
Peters, R.	0-0-0 Sk 0 TDs 0

RECEIVING

Name	NEBRASKA
Brown, L.	2 31 15.5 0 26
Jackson, V.	1 15 15.0 0 15

TEXAS TECH

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
McKenzie, M.	6	56	9.3	0	19
Jackson, D.	2	16	8.0	0	10

FIELD GOALS

Name	NEBRASKA
Brown, K.	0-29 30-39 40-49 50-60 60+ LK
	0-0 2-2 1-1 0-0 0-0 41

Name	TEXAS TECH
Greaser, J.	0-29 30-39 40-49 50-60 60+ LK
	0-0 0-0 0-0 0-1 0-0 0-0

DEFENSE

Name	NEBRASKA
Brown, M.	UT AT TT TFL/Yds Int/Yds S/Yds
Peter, J.	3 3 6 2-8 0-0 1-5
McFarlin, O.	3 3 6 1-5 0-0 1-5
Wiltz, J.	2 4 6 1-2 0-0 1-2
Warfield, E.	2 2 4 0-0 0-0 0-0
Wistrom, G.	3 0 3 2-3 0-0 0-0
Rucker, M.	1 2 3 2-6.5 0-0 0-0

Name	TEXAS TECH
Reagor, M.	UT AT TT TFL/Yds Int/Yds S/Yds
Rucker, T.	4 5 9 0-0 0-0 0-0
McCullar, K.	1 7 8 1-3.5 0-0 1-3.5
Butler, E.	1 6 7 0-0 0-0 0-0
Lemmons, D.	1 6 7 0-0 0-0 0-0

GAME 7 • OCTOBER 25, 1997

Nebraska 35, Kansas 0

Memorial Stadium • Lawrence, Kan. • Attendance: 42,000

A couple of hours after two of four banks of stadium lights at Kansas' Memorial Stadium shut down with just under 10 minutes left in the first half, the Blackshirts turned out the lights on the Kansas Jayhawks, 35-0, for Nebraska's second-consecutive shutout.

The Jayhawks seemed determined to stop the Huskers' powerful running game, often stacking eight or sometimes nine players at the line of scrimmage. But Nebraska still outgained Kansas on the ground, 382 yards to just 21 for the Jayhawks. Nebraska senior quarterback Scott Frost (who had 121 rushing yards) and junior fullback Joel Makovicka each scored a pair of touchdowns, and junior I-back Ahman Green had a game-high 123 yards and a touchdown on 25 carries.

The Blackshirts dominated the Kansas offense, registering four sacks — two by All-American rush end Grant Wistrom and one each by tackles Jason Peter and Steve Warren — and holding the Jayhawks to just four first downs.

Nevertheless, the Cornhuskers said they were not as pleased as some might expect, considering the decisive final score.

"Offensively, we were a little disappointed in the way we played," Makovicka said. "We were kind of flat in the third quarter. We're lucky tonight that we had such a great defense."

Nebraska limited the 'Hawks to just 48 total yards — on 48 offensive plays — the lowest offensive total in KU history. The Jayhawks failed to register a first down in the first half, and ran only 18 plays before the intermission.

"I think our defense is coming along, but you've got to temper that a little bit," Nebraska head coach Tom Osborne said. "You always have to gauge the strength of the side of the ball you're going against."

Nevertheless, "a shutout is a shutout," Wistrom said. "Shutouts are tough, no matter who you're playing."

The Jayhawks' paltry offensive numbers were "pretty



Fullback Joel Makovicka burst through the KU defense for 82 yards and a pair of scores.

impressive," Wistrom said. "That says a lot for our defense. I think defensively, we're getting better and better."

Osborne said that despite the 35 points, the Husker offense was not running at optimum efficiency.

"At times, we struggled," Osborne said. "We were going against the strongest part of their team. They used a lot of schemes, showed us a lot of different pictures. We were always guessing."

The victory was the Cornhuskers' first as the top-ranked team in the nation.

"We're No. 1 right now," Green said, "and we're going to get everyone's best shot." ■

SCORE BY QUARTERS

TEAM	1	2	3	4	Final
Kansas	0	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	7	14	0	14	35

TEAM STATISTICS

	KU	NU
FIRST DOWNS	4	22
By Rushing	2	19
By Passing	2	1
By Penalty	0	2
NET YARDS RUSHING	21	382
Attempts	31	65
Gained	68	422
Lost	47	40
Yards Per Rush	.67	5.9
NET YARDS PASSING	27	33
Attempts	17	10
Completed	6	4
Percent Completed	35.3	40.0
Had Intercepted	0	0
TOTAL OFFENSE	48	415
Total Plays	48	75
FUMBLES	4	4
Fumbles Lost	1	0
PENALTIES	10	6
Yards Penalized	78	53
PUNTS	12	6
Punting Yardage	535	171
Average Per Punt	44.6	28.5
PUNT RETURNS	2	9
Return Yardage	10	35
KICKOFF RETURNS	4	1
Return Yardage	47	28
POSSESSION TIME	25:40	34:20
SACKS BY	2	4
Yards	14	35

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

NEBRASKA					
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Green, A.	25	123	4.9	1	31
Frost, S.	21	121	5.8	2	27
Makovicka, J.	10	82	8.2	2	38
London, F.	3	21	7.0	0	15
Miller, W.	11	11	11.0	0	11
Sims, J.	2	9	4.5	0	7

KANSAS					
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Vonn, E.	13	39	3.0	0	15
Bruce, J.	7	15	2.1	0	13
Bowles, M.	4	8	2.0	0	3

PASSING

NEBRASKA					
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs	LP
Frost, S.	4-9-0	2	33	0	
London, F.	0-10	0	0	0	

KANSAS					
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs	LP
Wegner, Z.	6-17-0	4	27	0	

RECEIVING

NEBRASKA					
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Brown, L.	2	22	11.0	0	11
Green, A.	1	6	6.0	0	6

KANSAS

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Gray, B.	3	27	9.0	0	15
Chandler, M.	1	2	2.0	0	2

FIELD GOALS

NEBRASKA					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
None attempted					LK

KANSAS					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
None attempted					LK

DEFENSE

NEBRASKA

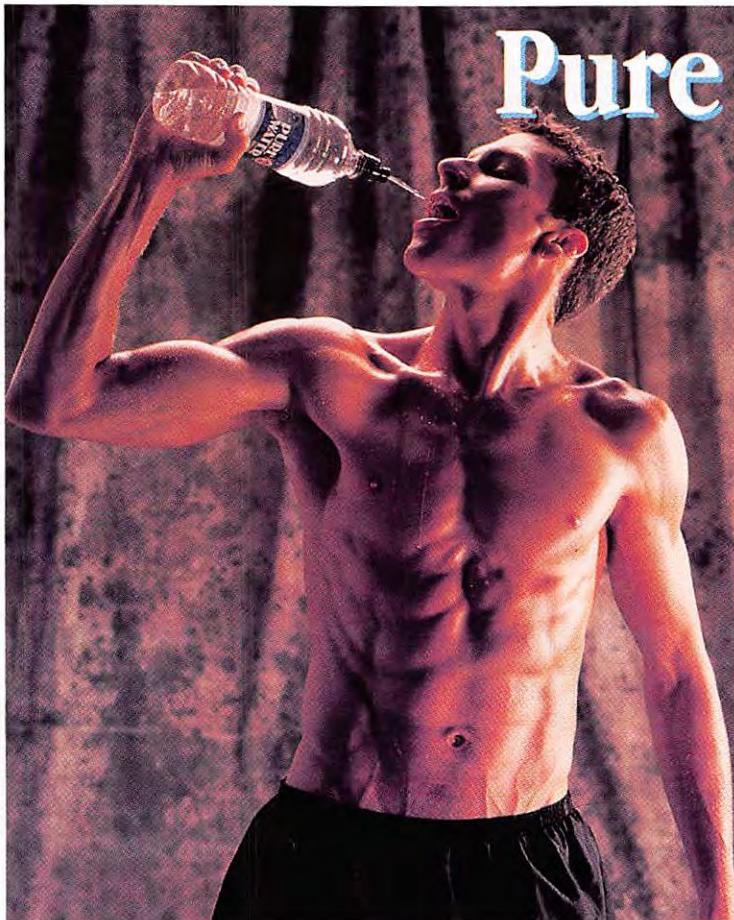
Name	UT	AT	TT	TF	Yds.	Int/Yds	S/Yds
Foreman, J.	3	3	6	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-0
Peter, J.	3	2	5	2-11	0-0	1-10	
Wistrom, G.	3	1	4	3-20	0-0	2-19	
Johnson, E.	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	
Ortiz, T.	2	1	3	1-1	0-0	0-0	
Warfield, E.	2	1	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	
Warren, S.	1	2	3	1-6	0-0	1-6	
Kelsay, C.	1	2	3	1-3	0-0	0-0	

KANSAS

Name	UT	AT	TT	TF	Yds.	Int/Yds	S/Yds
Thorin, J.	4	12	16	1-3	0-0	0-0	0-0
Blevins, T.	3	9	12	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0
Jones, M.	6	2	8	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-0
Bratten, S.	4	3	7	3-9	0-0	0-0	0-0

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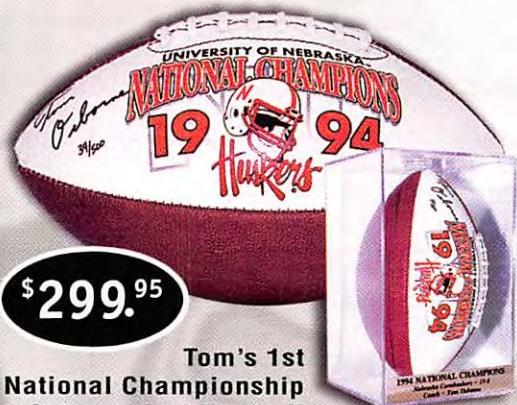
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GAME 8 • NOVEMBER 1, 1997

Nebraska 69, Oklahoma 7

Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb. • Attendance: 75,926

Tom Osborne got his 250th career victory as Nebraska's head coach and the Cornhuskers put the heralded Nebraska-Oklahoma series on hold for a couple of years after a 69-7 mauling of the rival Sooners.

The game clearly showed how much separates the teams that used to battle each other for the top spot in the now-defunct Big Eight conference, and sometimes in the nation. The once-proud Sooners have fallen to the level of also-rans.

Junior I-back Ahman Green had 105 yards on the ground to move into third place on the all-time Nebraska rushing list. Fullback Joel Makovicka ran for 101 yards and three touchdowns, and freshman I-back Correll Buckhalter had a pair of touchdowns. Quarterback Scott Frost also ran for a touchdown, as did wingback Lance Brown and little-used fullback Willie Miller.

The Oklahoma ground game — the Sooners had gone back to the option offense on a full-time basis — was every bit as ineffective as the Nebraska attack was productive. The Sooners managed just 85 yards on the ground, and only 154 yards of total offense, compared to 552 total yards put up by the Huskers.

"We've just got so many weapons on offense that if they're keying on any one of them, some other weapon's going to break out," Makovicka said.

The Sooners were further hampered by the fact that they were missing their starting running back tandem, fullback Jermaine Fazande and halfback De'Mond Parker. Parker was one of the premier runners in the conference, but it is doubtful that he or Fazande would have made much difference in the game.

The game became somewhat of a coming-out party for freshman Bobby Newcombe. After recruiting him as an option quarterback, the Nebraska coaching staff tried to get Newcombe on the field at a number of positions to take advantage of his remarkable athletic gifts. He rushed twice for 19 yards, caught three passes for 88 yards and a touchdown and



Grant Wistrom and the Blackshirts forced seven OU fumbles in Tom Osborne's 250th victory.

returned two punts for 60 yards, including one 57-yarder.

Osborne said he recognized the talent he had in the multi-talented Newcombe.

"He did some great things out there today. He's a big play guy," Osborne said. "He's really come around in the last couple of weeks to where he knows the offense well enough, where he's very productive, and we can put him in almost any situation and he'll hold his own."

Prior to this time, we were always a little bit concerned about him maybe not blocking the right guy or not blocking the right technique on an option or something ... but he's really come along well." ■

SCORE BY QUARTERS					
TEAM	1	2	3	4	Final
Oklahoma	0	0	7	0	—
Nebraska	20	14	21	14	— 69

TEAM STATISTICS

	OU	NU
FIRST DOWNS	11	27
By Rushing	7	21
By Passing	3	6
By Penalty	1	0
NET YARDS RUSHING	85	409
Attempts	50	61
Gained	158	414
Lost	73	5
Yards Per Rush	1.7	6.7
NET YARDS PASSING	69	143
Attempts	9	12
Completed	3	7
Percent Completed	33.3	58.3
Had Intercepted	0	0
TOTAL OFFENSE	154	552
Total Plays	59	73
FUMBLES	7	2
Fumbles Lost	4	1
PENALTIES	5	3
Yards Penalized	38	19
PUNTS	8	1
Punting Yardage	259	30
Average Per Punt	32.4	30.0
PUNT RETURNS	0	3
Return Yardage	0	77
KICKOFF RETURNS	9	2
Return Yardage	139	34
POSSESSION TIME	30:11	29:49
SACKS BY	0	5
Yards	0	36

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Green, A.	18	105	5.8	0	20
Makovicka, J.	10	101	10.1	3	37
Frost, S.	8	66	8.3	1	24
Buckhalter, C.	9	54	6.0	2	15
Miller, W.	4	22	5.5	1	7
London, F.	3	20	6.7	0	13

Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Littrell, S.	21	88	4.2	1	12
Thatcher, J.T.	9	26	2.9	0	11

PASSING

Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs
Frost, S.	6-100	0	107	0
London, F.	1-20	0	36	0

Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs
Moore, E.	2-40	3	58	0
Daniels, B.	1-20	2	11	0
Fuente, J.	0-3-0	0	0	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Newcombe, B.	3	88	29.3	1	40

NEBRASKA

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Alexander, S.	2	58	29	0	40
Little, M.	1	11	11.0	0	11

FIELD GOALS

Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+	LK
Brown, K.	1-1	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	42

Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+	LK
None attempted						

DEFENSE

NEBRASKA

Name	UT	AT	TT	TEFL/Yds	Int/Yds	S/Yds
Brown, M.	4	7	11	1-2	0-0	0-0
Wistrom, G.	9	1	10	4-23	0-0	2-10
Peter, J.	4	2	6	1-4	0-0	1-4
Polk, C.	0	6	6	.5-1	0-0	0-0
Johnson, E.	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0-0
Ortiz, T.	2	3	5	1-9	0-0	1-9
Rucker, M.	2	2	4	1-13	0-0	1-13
Warfield, E.	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0-0

OKLAHOMA

Name	UT	AT	TT	TEFL/Yds	Int/Yds	S/Yds
Joseph, G.	6	6	12	1-1	0-0	0-0
Gregg, K.	3	8	11	2-2	0-0	0-0
Smith, T.	5	4	9	0-0	0-0	0-0
Moore, B.	2	4	6	0-0	0-0	0-0

GAME 9 • NOVEMBER 8, 1997

Nebraska 45, Missouri 38 (OT)

Memorial Stadium • Columbia, Mo. • Attendance: 66,846

It will go down as one of the most memorable games in Nebraska history, a game that made a cult hero out of freshman receiver Matt Davison.

The Huskers traveled to Columbia, Mo., to face a rapidly improving Tigers' team, well aware that Mizzou quarterback Corby Jones was having a stellar season that eventually would earn him first-team All-Big 12 honors.

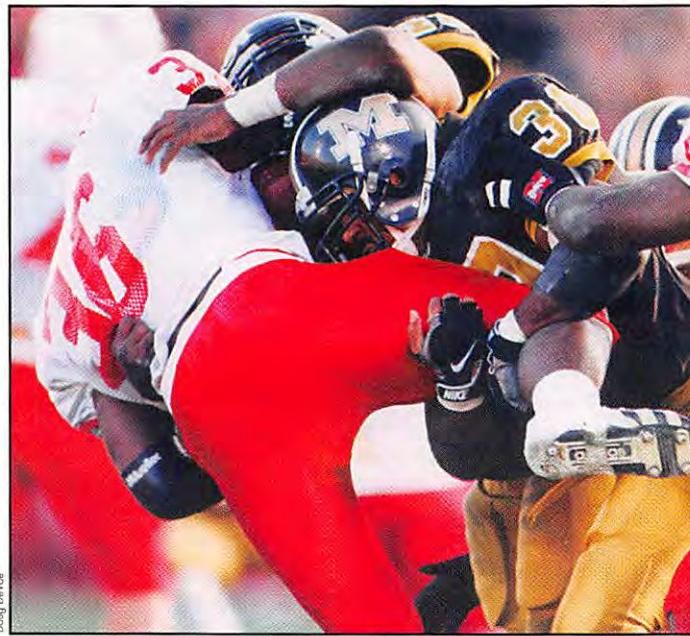
Trailing, 38-31, with just 1:02 to play, Nebraska quarterback Scott Frost led the Huskers on a 67-yard scoring drive without the benefits of any time-outs. Directing an offense that skeptics have said is able only to run the ball, Frost led Nebraska down the field with a series of short quick passes.

On the last play of regulation, Frost saw wingback Shevin Wiggins cutting from the right side across the end zone and let fly. The ball sailed a little bit behind Wiggins, who spun around, reaching for it. Just out of Wiggins' reach, the ball hit Wiggins' leg and bounced up in the air and into the end zone. (Wiggins later would admit that he had kicked at the ball — a violation of the rules — hoping for a miracle deflection to another Nebraska receiver.)

Wiggins' prayer was answered. Davison, starting on the left sideline, remembered his coaches saying that when not the target of a pass, a receiver should sprint to the area of the ball — just in case. When the ball glanced off Wiggins' leg, Davison dove to make the miracle catch. He stood up and showed the ball to the officials.

"It seemed like forever for the ball to get there," Davison said. "There was no doubt in my mind. I just wanted to see the call before I got excited." Kris Brown then drilled the extra point to send the game into overtime.

The overtime period seemed almost anticlimactic. The Huskers needed just three plays to score on their overtime possession in school history. When the Tigers got the ball back, they gained 9 yards on their first three plays. On fourth down, rush ends Grant Wistrom and Mike Rucker crashed through the Mizzou offensive line to drop Jones for a 6-yard loss to seal the win for the Cornhuskers.



Design by Steve

Correll Buckhalter and the Cornhuskers almost got up-ended by the much-improved Tigers.

"I can't remember one quite like that," Nebraska coach Tom Osborne said after earning career win No. 251. "We had some bad breaks and some good breaks. The good breaks came at the end of the game."

Lost in the dramatics of the final minutes was the fact that Frost played the best game of his life.

After the game, Frost admitted he was driven in no small part by the amount of praise heaped upon his Missouri counterpart, Jones.

"There's been a lot said about him this week, about if he had come to Nebraska, I wouldn't be playing," Frost said. "I take that to heart. He's a great player, but I am, too." ■

SCORE BY QUARTERS						
TEAM	1	2	3	4	OT	Final
Missouri	7	17	7	7	0	— 38
Nebraska	14	7	7	10	7	— 45

TEAM STATISTICS

	MU	NU
FIRST DOWNS	20	28
By Rushing	8	21
By Passing	10	7
By Penalty	2	0
NET YARDS RUSHING	153	353
Attempts	46	61
Gained	194	359
Lost	41	6
Yards Per Rush	3.3	5.8
NET YARDS PASSING	233	175
Attempts	20	24
Completed	12	11
Percent Completed	60.0	45.8
Had Intercepted	1	2
TOTAL OFFENSE	386	528
Total Plays	66	85
FUMBLES	0	2
Fumbles Lost	0	1
PENALTIES	2	5
Yards Penalized	10	45
PUNTS	4	2
Punting Yards	108	70
Average Per Punt	27.0	35.0
PUNT RETURNS	1	1
Return Yards	3	17
KICKOFF RETURNS	4	7
Return Yards	139	185
POSSESSION TIME	30:05	29:55
SACKS BY	0	5
Yards	0	38

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

NEBRASKA				
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs
Green, A.	30	189	6.3	1
Frost, S.	23	141	6.1	4
Makovicka, J.	7	24	3.4	0
Buckhalter, C.	1	-1	-1.0	0

MISSOURI				
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs
Jones, C.	21	60	2.9	1
Olivo, B.	11	42	3.8	1
Blackwell, E.	9	30	3.3	0
West, D.	3	13	4.3	0
Janes, R.	2	8	4.0	0

PASSING

NEBRASKA				
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs
Frost, S.	11-24-2	0	175	1

MISSOURI				
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs
Jones, C.	12-20-1	5	233	3

RECEIVING

NEBRASKA				
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs
Cheatham, K.	5	54	10.8	0
Green, A.	2	48	24.0	0
Newcombe, B.	1	33	33.0	0

FIELD GOALS

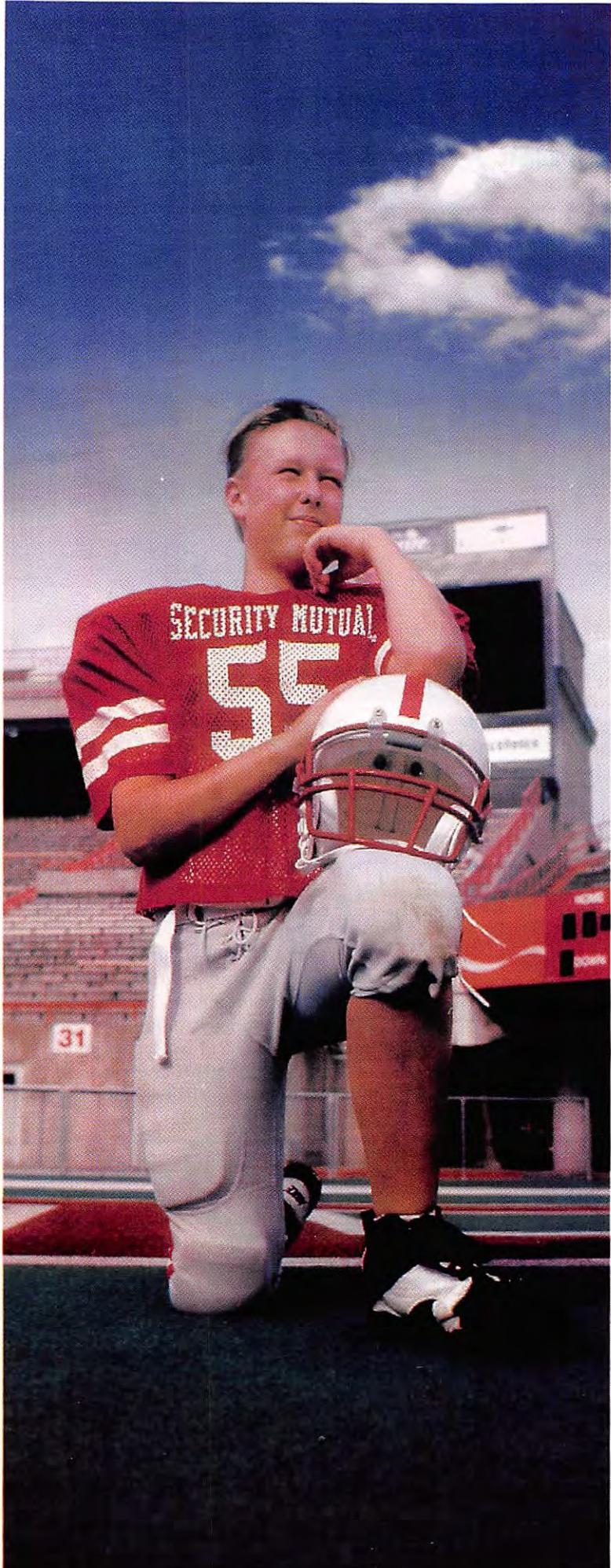
NEBRASKA					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
Brown, K.	0-0	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0

MISSOURI					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	LK
Knickman, S.	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	39

DEFENSE

NEBRASKA					
Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Yds	Int/Yds
McFarlin, O.	6	2	8	0-0	0-0
Foreman, J.	5	3	8	0-0	0-0
Brown, M.	3	5	8	0-0	0-0
Wiltz, J.	5	1	6	0-0	0-0
Warfield, E.	4	2	6	0-0	0-0
Peter, J.	4	2	6	0-0	0-0
Wistrom, G.	3	2	5	3-23	0-0
Rucker, M.	2	2	4	4-23	0-0

MISSOURI					
Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Yds	Int/Yds
Jones, D.	9	4	13	0-0	0-0
Perkins, W.	8	2	10	0-0	0-0
Odom, B.	5	5	10	0-0	0-0



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GAME 10 • NOVEMBER 15, 1997

Nebraska 77, Iowa State 14

Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb. • Attendance: 75,613

In the final home game for the Nebraska senior class, the Cornhuskers administered a beating like those with which their fans have become familiar.

A week after dropping from the top spot in the polls because of their nail-biting victory over Mizzou, the Huskers responded by putting up 63 first-half points en route to a 77-14 pounding of Iowa State.

All-American rush end Grant Wistrom, who would end the season by winning the Lombardi Award as the nation's best lineman, said it was hard to leave the field at Memorial Stadium for the last time.

"I just tried to soak everything in one last time — one last tunnel walk, one last time walking out in front of the fans, getting introduced, giving Coach (Tom) Osborne a hug and just saying, 'Thanks for everything you've ever done for me,' just hearing the roar of the crowd one more time," Wistrom said. "There will certainly be some things that will be tough to let go of."

"We've won a lot of football games here, and if I could do it all over again, I wouldn't be wearing any other color but the red and white. I'm enjoying what I do. I love the guys I'm playing with. Football, it just doesn't get any more fun. It's special playing at home here."

Wistrom said the best thing about playing for Nebraska is the fans, who make Memorial Stadium "the greatest place in America to play football."

"Our crowd is the best in the country," Wistrom said. "You really can't say enough good things about them. It's definitely going to be one of the things I miss about playing here, just the 'love you' feel from the crowd when you're on the field, the thrill you can get from bringing 75,000 people to their feet just by waving your arms up in the air. That's a great feeling when you're out there."

Junior Nebraska I-back Ahman Green broke the 200-yard barrier against the 'Clones, rambling for 209 yards and three touchdowns on just 15 carries — an average of just under 14 yards per carry.

TEAM STATISTICS

	ISU	NU
FIRST DOWNS	14	29
By Rushing	7	24
By Passing	6	5
By Penalty	1	0
NET YARDS RUSHING	75	473
Attempts	34	63
Gained	118	491
Lost	43	18
Yards Per Rush	2.2	7.6
NET YARDS PASSING	153	121
Attempts	38	12
Completed	11	9
Percent Completed	28.9	75.0
Had Interceptions	2	0
TOTAL OFFENSE	228	594
Total Plays	72	75
FUMBLES	4	2
Fumbles Lost	3	2
PENALTIES	11	5
Yards Penalized	82	37
PUNTS	9	2
Punting Yardage	350	70
Average Per Punt	38.9	35.0
PUNT RETURNS	1	4
Return Yardage	12	104
KICKOFF RETURNS	10	2
Return Yardage	248	60
POSSESSION TIME	29:28	30:32
SACKS BY	0	3
Yards	0	31

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

NEBRASKA					
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Green, A.	15	209	13.9	3	49
Frost, S.	15	88	11.0	2	24
Newcombe, B.	2	31	15.5	1	16
Sims, J.	6	28	4.7	0	11
Makovicka, J.	5	27	5.4	1	9

IOWA STATE					
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Davis, D.	22	62	2.8	1	13
Heavens, J.	5	26	5.2	0	11
Green, D.	1	9	9.0	0	9

PASSING

NEBRASKA					
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs	
Frost, S.	8-9-0	0	111	1	
London, F.	13-0	0	10	0	

IOWA STATE					
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs	
Bandhauer, T.	11-36-1	3	153	1	
Davis, D.	0-0-0	0	0	0	

RECEIVING

NEBRASKA					
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Jackson, S.	3	32	10.7	1	20
Chealham, K.	2	26	13.0	0	16



Shevin Wiggins and the Huskers were able to sidestep everything the Cyclones threw at them.

But Green was not the only Husker to inflict pain on the Iowa State defense. Quarterback Scott Frost threw for 111 yards and ran for 88 more and two touchdowns, and quarterback-turned-wingback/kick-returner Bobby Newcombe and fullback Joel Makovicka each added a touchdown.

But Frost said the impression from this game that will remain with him the longest is that of the ovation the seniors got from the Memorial Stadium.

"The only thing I regret is, I only had two years in the program," Frost said. "It's a class-act program. This is where somebody who wants to play football should want to come."

IOWA STATE					
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Davis, D.	4	35	8.8	0	12
Watley, T.	3	64	21.3	1	35

FIELD GOALS

NEBRASKA					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
None attempted					LK

IOWA STATE					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
None attempted					LK

DEFENSE

NEBRASKA					
Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Yds	Int/Yds
Johnson, E.	1	8	9	2-13	0-0
Brown, M.	2	3	5	0-0	0-0
Watfield, E.	2	2	4	1-1	0-0
Shaw, B.	0	4	4	1-2	0-0
Peter, J.	0	4	4	1-2	0-0
Ebke, M.	1	2	3	0-0	0-0
Kaiser, L.	1	2	3	0-0	0-0

IOWA STATE					
Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Yds	Int/Yds
Cooper, M.	4	6	10	0-0	0-0
Hudson, K.	5	5	10	0-0	0-0
Rhamy, P.	3	7	10	0-0	0-0
Brcka, D.	3	6	9	0-0	0-0

GAME 11 • NOVEMBER 28, 1997

Nebraska 27, Colorado 24

Folsom Field • Boulder, Colo. • Attendance: 52,738

The Nebraska Cornhuskers overcame a sluggish fourth quarter to end their regular season with an unblemished 11-0 record, edging Colorado, 27-24.

"You can't be satisfied when you win, 27-24," guard Aaron Taylor said. "It's a situation where we needed to step up at certain times in the game. Offensively and defensively, we didn't do it. So that's where it's disappointing. It's a negative that we didn't go out and play well, but it's also a positive that we know we haven't peaked yet. So there's a little satisfaction there, knowing that we can do better and still win ballgames."

Junior I-back Ahman Green broke the 200-yard plateau for the second consecutive game. The Huskers' No. 2 all-time rusher scampered for 202 yards and a pair of touchdowns to help the Huskers build an early lead. But with Colorado quarterback John Hessler throwing for a career-best 362 yards, the Buffaloes were able to climb back into the game.

Standout Colorado receiver Phil Savoy caught six of Hessler's tosses for 107 yards to lead the Buffaloes aerial attack. Trailing, 27-10, going into the fourth quarter, the Buffs shut out the Huskers in the final stanza but were unable to close the gap entirely.

Senior offensive lineman Matt Hoskinson was quick to deflect any blame skeptics might aim at the Nebraska defense.

"The defense giving up 24 points, a lot of that was because of the offense's inefficiencies, and some in the kicking game," Hoskinson said. "I don't think they're to blame at all. I want to place all this blame on the offense. You can ask anyone else — we're not a placing-blame type of a team."

"But as an offensive line, we like to take the blame when things go wrong, and I'll tell you what — if our offensive line had performed like I thought we could, the score wouldn't have been as close as it was. When you get the ball inside their 50 three or four times in the second half and don't score, that's trouble. That's dis-



Scott Frost became just the 10th player ever to run and pass for over 1,000 yards in a season.

pointing. That's not a No. 1 team. That's not a national championship team."

Senior Nebraska quarterback Scott Frost, who rushed for 76 yards and a touchdown, couldn't explain why the final score was so close.

"I don't know if we let down," Frost said. "We just kept having little things happen."

One of the "little things" that happened was that Frost became just the 10th player in NCAA history to rush and pass for over 1,000 yards in a season.

The Huskers insisted they were not surprised that the Buffaloes played them so tough. "We knew we were going to get a dogfight," Green said. ■

SCORE BY QUARTERS

TEAM	1	2	3	4	Final
Colorado	0	3	7	14	24
Nebraska	3	7	17	0	27

TEAM STATISTICS

	CU	NU
FIRST DOWNS	20	20
By Rushing	5	15
By Passing	14	5
By Penalty	1	0
NET YARDS RUSHING	93	350
Attempts	25	58
Gained	118	361
Lost	25	11
Yards Per Rush	3.7	6.0
NET YARDS PASSING	362	92
Attempts	36	14
Completed	19	7
Percent Completed	52.8	50.0
Had Intercepted	2	0
TOTAL OFFENSE	455	442
Total Plays	61	72
FUMBLES	0	3
Fumbles Lost	0	2
PENALTIES	7	7
Yards Penalized	71	56
PUNTS	4	5
Punting Yards	156	192
Average Per Punt	39.0	38.4
PUNT RETURNS	1	4
Return Yards	6	27
KICKOFF RETURNS	1	2
Return Yards	31	24
POSSESSION TIME	26:09	33:51
SACKS BY	0	3
Yards	0	12

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

NEBRASKA					
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Green, A.	29	202	6.9	2	64
Frost, S.	14	76	5.4	1	20
Makovicka, J.	12	46	3.8	0	7
Sims, T.	3	26	8.7	0	16

COLORADO					
Name	Att.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Cherrington, D.	10	78	7.8	0	43
Trotman, H.	8	26	3.3	0	8
Weisinger, J.	2	4	-2.0	0	1
Hessler, J.	5	7	-1.4	0	8

PASSING

NEBRASKA					
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs	
Frost, S.	7-14-0	0	92	0	
COLORADO					
Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs	
Hessler, J.	19-35-2	2	362	3	
Weisinger, J.	0-1-0	1	0	0	

RECEIVING

NEBRASKA					
Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Cheatham, K.	2	42	2.1	0	31
Green, A.	2	8	-4.0	0	0
Davison, M.	1	22	22.0	0	22

COLORADO

Name	No.	Yds.	YPC	TDs	LP
Savoy, P.	6	107	17.8	0	22
Anderson, C.	3	39	13.0	0	15

FIELD GOALS

NEBRASKA					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
Brown, K.	1-1	1-1	1-1	0-0	0-0

COLORADO					
Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+
Aldrich, J.	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-0
Lesley, J.	0-0	0-0	0-0	0-1	0-0

DEFENSE

NEBRASKA

Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Vds	Int/Yds	S/Yds
Foreman, J.	4	8	12	0-0	0-0	0-0
Swiney, E.	5	2	7	0-0	0-0	1-2
Brown, R.	5	1	6	0-0	0-0	0-0
Willz, J.	1	5	6	0-0	0-0	0-0
Rucker, M.	4	1	5	1-2	0-0	2-12
Peter, J.	3	1	4	0-0	0-0	1-5
McFarlin, O.	2	2	4	1-3	0-0	0-0

COLORADO

Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Vds	Int/Yds	S/Yds
Sutler, R.	12	7	19	0-0	0-0	0-0
Merkerson, R.	6	4	10	0-0	0-0	0-0
Block, R.	5	4	9	0-0	0-0	0-0
Kelly, B.	6	2	8	1-2	0-0	0-0

GAME 12 • DECEMBER 6, 1997 • BIG 12 CHAMPIONSHIP

Nebraska 54, Texas A&M 15

AlamoDome • San Antonio, Texas • Attendance: 64,824

Any questions about whether the Big 12's South Division could match up with the best the North Division had to offer were answered in the Big 12 Championship Game in San Antonio.

Nebraska entered the game amid speculation that since Texas had upset the Huskers in last year's inaugural conference title game, the Cornhuskers were susceptible to another such ambush this year at the hands of the Aggies.

Wrong. The Huskers scored 23 unanswered points before the Aggies were able to get on the scoreboard, and then cruised to a 54-15 plastering of Texas A&M.

"Last year against Texas, we didn't get that excited and looked ahead to the next game," Nebraska head coach Tom Osborne said, "and we goofed up."

The Aggies came in with a proficient running game, but were able to muster just 13 yards on the ground. Looking back, A&M had been able to post most of its gaudy stats against a weaker schedule than most high school teams face, but when they played a team with a legitimate rushing defense, like Kansas State or Texas Tech, the Aggies lost.

Texas Tech and Kansas State have decent defenses, but they never will be confused with the Blackshirts, who set the tone for the game on the Aggies' first play from scrimmage, when NU defensive tackle Jason Peter — back spasms and all — crashed through the A&M offensive line and nearly devoured Aggie quarterback Brandon Stewart. The sack by Peter, who left the game early when his back flared up again, was one of six posted by the Husker defense. A&M's leading ground-gainer was Sirr Parker with 28 yards; he was the only Aggie to gain more than 5 yards on the ground.

A year ago, the Longhorns played Nebraska tough for the full game, and pulled out what proved to be a great win for the Texas program. This year, the game essentially was over by the end of the first quarter.

The game was so lopsided that the Huskers' primary



The Aggies quickly realized that their decision to test the Nebraska secondary was not a wise one.

concern after the game was the state of Peter's aching back.

"He probably needs two weeks off," NU head coach Tom Osborne said. "He's a player who makes a difference."

When asked if he thought Nebraska is the best team in the country, Texas A&M head coach R.C. Slocum refused to answer.

"There is no way I can answer the question on whether they are the best team in the country," Slocum said. "I don't think there is anyone who could answer that question. But I will say there is not another team in the country I would be more concerned about playing than Nebraska. Until someone else proves differently, they will have my vote." ■

SCORE BY QUARTERS

TEAM	1	2	3	4	Final
A&M	0	3	0	12 —	15
Nebraska	16	21	3	14 —	54

TEAM STATISTICS

	A&M	NU
FIRST DOWNS	13	25
By Rushing	4	19
By Passing	8	6
By Penalty	1	0
NET YARDS RUSHING	13	335
Attempts	23	67
Gained	53	351
Lost	40	16
Yards Per Rush	.56	5.0
NET YARDS PASSING	264	201
Attempts	48	18
Completed	21	12
Percent Completed	43.8	66.6
Had Intercepted	2	0
TOTAL OFFENSE	277	536
Total Plays	71	85
FUMBLES	0	5
Fumbles Lost	0	4
PENALTIES	6	4
Yards Penalized	43	38
PUNTS	7	2
Punting Yards	333	79
Average Per Punt	47.5	39.5
PUNT RETURNS	1	2
Return Yards	26	55
KICKOFF RETURNS	5	2
Return Yards	78	45
POSSESSION TIME	25:37	34:23
SACKS BY	0	6
Yards	0	38

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING

Name	Att.	Yds.	VPC	TDs	LP
Green, A.	34	179	5.3	3	25
Frost, S.	15	79	5.3	2	25
Newcombe, B.	2	27	13.5	0	25
Makovich, J.	7	17	2.4	0	5
London, F.	2	12	6.0	0	9
Sims, J.	3	9	3.0	0	6

TEXAS A&M

Name	Att.	Yds.	VPC	TDs	LP
Parker, S.	10	28	2.8	0	10
Hall, D.	3	5	1.7	0	2
Hardeman, D.	2	3	1.5	0	2

PASSING

Name	Cmp-Att-Int	Sk	Yds.	TDs
Frost, S.	12-18-0	0	201	0
Stewart, B.	18-38-2	4	227	1
McCown, R.	3-9-0	2	37	0

RECEIVING

Name	No.	Yds.	VPC	TDs	LP
Davison, M.	3	68	22.7	0	51
Green, A.	3	16	5.3	0	6

TEXAS A&M

Name	No.	Yds.	VPC	TDs	LP
Spiller, D.	4	89	22.3	1	63
Cole, C.	4	56	14.0	0	30

FIELD GOALS

NEBRASKA

Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+	LK
Brown, K.	2-2	1-1	1-1	0-0	0-0	44

TEXAS A&M

Name	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	60+	LK
Bryan, K.	0-0	1-1	0-0	0-0	0-0	32

DEFENSE

NEBRASKA

Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Yds	Int/Yds	S/Yds
Warren, S.	5	0	5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Brown, M.	4	1	5	1.2	1-26	0.0
Harrison, B.	4	0	4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Walker, J.	3	0	3	1.8	0.0	1-8
Swiney, E.	3	0	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Warfield, E.	3	0	3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Kelsay, C.	2	0	2	1.9	0.0	1-9
Brown II, R.	2	0	2	0.0	0.0	0.0

TEXAS A&M

Name	UT	AT	TT	TFL/Yds	Int/Yds	S/Yds
Nguyen, D.	9	0	9	1.2	0.0	0.0
Coady, R.	7	1	8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Horn, S.	6	1	7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Driver, T.	2	2	4	0.0	0.0	0.0

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SOLICH

From page 57

time," Osborne said. "So it isn't like he's not prepared for this moment."

Solich, who was chosen as *Athlon's* Assistant Coach of the Year in 1993, demonstrated, to Osborne's satisfaction, a proficiency in all aspects of coaching, as well as an inclination to maintain the system that has produced Nebraska's remarkable success since Devaney arrived from Wyoming in 1962.

That was a recurrent theme at the news conference in December — and it wasn't a matter of Solich simply saying what everyone wanted to hear. During an interview in 1989, he said: "One thing in coaching is, coach what you know. That's one reason Nebraska has been successful over the years.

"The players know our system. The coaches know our system. When you find teams that can't quite get settled on an offense, that are changing offenses every spring, you don't see the consistency."

The key to a smooth transition was that athletic director Bill Byrne would agree on Osborne's choice of Solich as the new head coach — which Byrne did.

"The longer I've been here, the more I've learned our culture here is unique in many, many ways," Byrne told the *Omaha World-Herald*. "I thought it essential that Tom's successor be someone who knew our values and could continue the leadership we have had in this system. I've watched our coaching staff closely the past couple of years. Clearly, Frank Solich is going to be that person."

As a player at Nebraska, Solich's height and weight were never an issue, even though the Cornhusker media guide described him as "probably the smallest major college fullback in the country."

Solich's accomplishments needed no qualification. He was the first Cornhusker in modern history to rush for 200 yards in a game. His record 204 yards on 17 carries against Air Force remained the standard until 1976. He's well down the single-game list now.

"He was quite a football player, period," Devaney often said.

And he'll be quite a head coach, in Osborne's estimation.

"Frank will do a very good job," Osborne said.

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GREEN

From page 45

Dallas and couldn't participate in the news conference. "I wish they could be sitting right here next to me so it just doesn't look like I want to get out of here before they get back in town," Green said.

"I wanted them to be here. It was just the time schedule that didn't work out." The deadline for declaring for the NFL draft was at-hand. Green had little choice.

Osborne's decision to step aside as head coach wasn't a factor his leaving, Green said.

"A lot of people probably think that," he said. "If he was staying, this would still be my decision. I would love to play for Coach Solich. He was a great coach for me for three years."

Solich, Green's position coach, released a statement through the sports information office: "I have enjoyed having the opportunity to coach Ahman. He has tremendous talent and has certainly done a great job for Nebraska. I hope that his pro career is as successful as his college career

has been.

"Ahman has always been someone who has put the team first, and I appreciate that."

Green's departure, as well as that of senior back-up Jay Sims, leaves the competition at I-back wide-open in the spring. True freshman Correll Buckhalter shared the No. 2 spot with Sims on the Orange Bowl depth chart, with redshirted freshman Dan Alexander, who has been injury-plagued, at No. 3.

Freshman Dan White was redshirted this season, as was sophomore DeAngelo Evans, whose health status remains uncertain following two surgeries for a groin-related problem. In addition, the Cornhuskers have received oral commitments from several high school running backs, among them Robert Strong from Stockton, Calif., and Dahrran Diedrick from Cedarbrae Collegiate High School in Ontario, Canada.

Without question, Green will be missed. But there would have been little left for him to accomplish at Nebraska, he said. "Two national titles in three years, second on the all-time rushing list and halfway to my degree?

I have no regrets. I did everything I wanted to do here. I'm ready to go to the next level."

Green will be represented by Leigh Steinberg, a well-known agent whose clients include Steve Young of the San Francisco 49ers and Troy Aikman of the Dallas Cowboys.

"Money's important, but I'm much more concerned he go to a good team, one that has a chance to be successful," Steinberg told the *Lincoln Journal Star*. Green said he grew up a fan of the 49ers and Miami Dolphins, but "I've got to roll with the punches and play with whoever picks me."

That won't happen until April. For now, he has to get ready for the combine.

Even though he's convinced he made the right decision, leaving Nebraska isn't easy, Green said. He'll especially miss "my teammates and the coaches. I talked to a lot of guys, ex-Huskers who have been in the pros, and they said once you're in the NFL, you don't as a team spend the night (before a game) at a hotel just to get your mind ready. There's none of that. You show up game day and prepare yourself. ■

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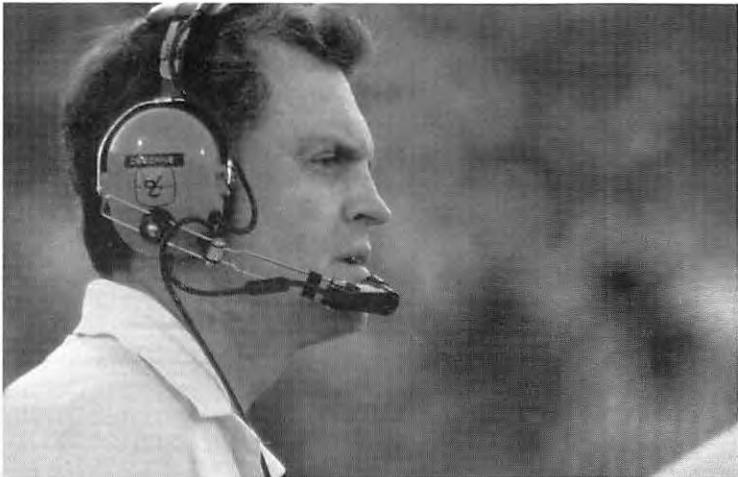


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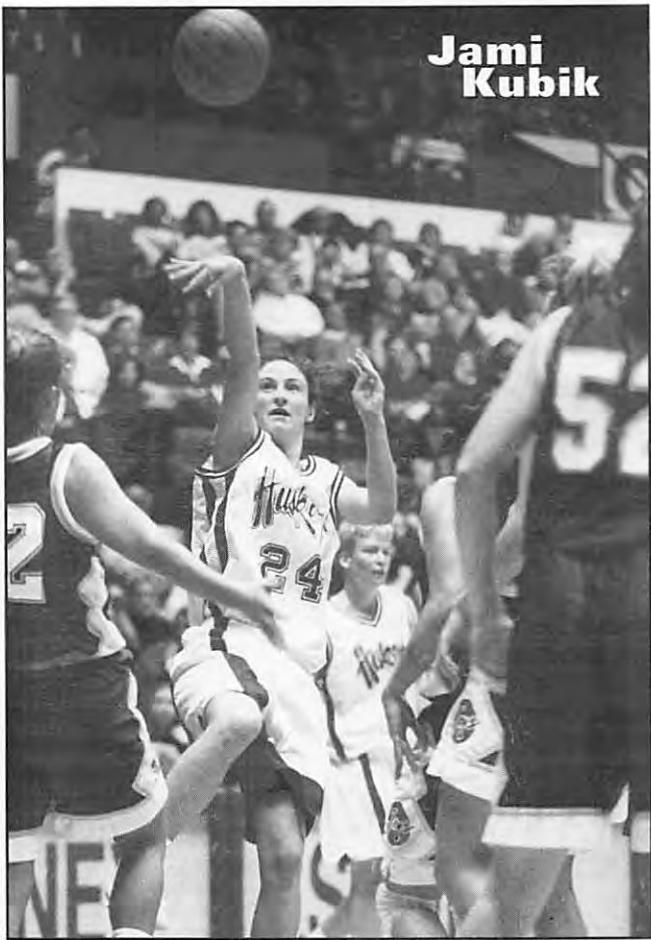


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Jami
Kubik



Nicole
Kubik

Sister Act

One's a shooter and the other's a defensive stopper. But together, Jami and Nicole Kubik have NU eyeing the postseason

By Steve Sipple

Paul Sanderford occasionally will have the Kubik sisters — Jami and Nicole — guard each other in practice.

"Jami just beats the crap out of Nicole, as far as being physical goes," the first-year Nebraska women's basketball coach said.

Of course, Jami Kubik, a 5-foot-11 senior, guards everyone in such a manner. She makes up for her shortcomings on offense — Nebraska assistant coach Jeff Walz calls her "J-Rock," in reference to her shooting touch — with her tenacity and intelligence on defense. She makes life miserable for whomever

she's guarding. For Jami Kubik, basketball is war. She'll guard a point guard or a center — it doesn't matter. She's the Huskers' defensive stopper.

Then there's Nicole, a 5-foot-10 sophomore.

"I'll tell you what, the other night (in Nebraska's Nov. 7 exhibition victory against a team called Zala Volan of Hungary), Nicole didn't guard anybody," Sanderford said.

On the bench, Sanderford growls like a bear if a player has a defensive lapse.

But he cuts Nicole Kubik some slack, because what she lacks as a defender she makes up for on offense. She knocks down three-pointers and drives to the hoop, making twisting lay-ups with either hand.

Sanderford has little problem seeing the positive sides of the Kubik sisters.

"I just love both those kids," Sanderford said. "If I could have two daughters, I'd wish they could be like Nicole and Jami."

Both Kubiks are regulars in Sanderford's starting lineup. Aside from that distinction, the sisters share few similarities in the way they play the game.

"Jami is the worker," Sanderford said. "Nicole is more the free spirit on the court. Nicole is a little bit of a jokester. But both of them are really driven by pride. They have tremendous pride."

"All you have to do is tell them they can't do something."

Nicole Kubik said her sister is driven by those who doubted she could play basketball at the Division I-A level.

WOMEN'S HOOPS

"When Jami first came to college, people were thinking, 'Oh, Jami can't play. She's just a defensive stopper,'" Nicole said. "But she has confidence in herself. She brought her work ethic with her as a freshman. But once you have something that drives you, it continues. It will continue the rest of her life."

Jami Kubik's inner drive manifests itself at practice. That was evident on Nov. 13, the day before Nebraska's season-opening win against Miami of Ohio. One by one, Sanderford's players straggled in for a mid-afternoon workout. Many slowly made their way to the training room. But Jami Kubik was already on the court, alone, shooting free throw after free throw.

"She could be dead-tired in practice, bending over between plays," Nicole said. "But the next play, she'll go all out."

Sanderford can thank his predecessor, Angela Beck, for recruiting Jami Kubik out of Cambridge, Neb., High School. Kubik attracted virtually no interest from any other Division I-A basketball programs, despite being named 1994 Miss Nebraska Basketball, after leading Cambridge to its second straight state title.

Initially, Beck recruited her as a walkon, as did Nebraska volleyball coach Terry Pettit. When Beck decided to offer a scholarship, Jami Kubik said, a tough decision became easy.

She has been a solid performer since her arrival. She started 12 games as a freshman, averaging 4.1 points. She got six starts as a sophomore, before becoming a regular in the lineup midway through last season, when she averaged 4.3 points and 3.2 rebounds.

Jami Kubik's value isn't in her statistics. It's in the blood, sweat and tears she leaves on the floor every time she steps on it. Sanderford said she has the ability to be a leader, and he wants her to be more vocal.

"That's not her nature, but she has to do it, because the kids respect her," he said. "You can't help but respect her."

"I'm really trying, but it's hard for me to be vocal," Jami said. "I know I'll get better, because Coach Sanderford will stay on me until I do."

Jami Kubik said she has no problem being vocal when it comes to pushing her sister to improve. During preseason drills, Jami said, Sanderford pushed Nicole to improve her defense.

"Nicole said, 'I feel like I'm doing



Sanderford has encouraged Jami Kubik to defy her natural tendency and be more of a vocal leader.

Though not noted for her defense, her average of 2.5 steals per game ranked fourth in the Big 12 Conference.

Nicole Kubik filled in at the point late last season when senior LaToya Doage was sidelined by a knee injury. This season, Nicole is being asked to handle the point guard duties again.

"It's all a learning experience for me," she said. "The thing I have to realize is I'm the floor leader now, and I'm supposed to get people in the right spots. I'm supposed to set people up to score, instead of scoring myself."

"I think, deep down, I'm a scorer. But it's like anything — you have to adjust. Even in a job, you're going to somehow have to adjust to certain situations."

The Kubiks played together on two Nebraska state high school championship teams at Cambridge. Nicole guided her team to a third crown as a junior, before Cambridge had its 81-game winning streak broken during her senior year, when she averaged 28.3 points, 7.0 rebounds, 6.0 assists and 6.0 steals.

"I wanted to play at Nebraska with Jami," she said. "I didn't want to play against her. We had so much success in high school, and we figured that maybe we could have that success again, and it's always better to share it with somebody."

"Some people say they don't want to go to school where their older brother or sister goes, because of the expectations. Well, those are the kind of expectations I wanted to have."

"Really, I think everybody is pretty good about not expecting me to be a defensive stopper like Jami is, and not expecting her to be able to shoot the three's. We're known for different things." ■

1997-98 WOMEN'S HOOP SCHEDULE/RESULTS

Overall Record: 12-4 Conference Record: 1-1		
N7	Slavyanka (Exhib)	W, 83-78
N12	Victoria All-Stars (Exhib)	L, 67-82
N14-21	Women's NIT	
N14	vs. Miami (Ohio)	W, 88-54
N16	vs. Alabama	W, 74-66
N21	vs. Western Kentucky	W, 84-70
N22	vs. Connecticut	L, 7181
N24	Creighton	W, 80-59
N28-29	CableVision Classic	
N28	vs. Stetson	W, 82-42
N29	vs. Kentucky	W, 68-59
D3	Bradley	W, 80-66
D5-7	Copper Bowl Classic	
D5	vs. Wichita State	W, 71-69
D7	vs. Arizona	L, 56-68
D12	@ Wisconsin-Green Bay	W, 76-60
D13	@ Wisconsin-Milwaukee	L, 76-88
D20	Wyoming	W, 92-41
D30	Northern Illinois	W, 95-57
J4	Kansas State	W, 80-58
J7	@ Colorado	L, 78-84
J10	@ Kansas (Fox)	1 p.m.
J14	Texas A&M	7:05 p.m.
J17	@ Kansas State	7 p.m.
J21	@ Baylor	7 p.m.
J28	Texas	7:05 p.m.
J31	Oklahoma State (Fox)	1 p.m.
F4	Missouri	7:05 p.m.
F7	@ Iowa State	7 p.m.
F11	Kansas	7:05 p.m.
F14	@ Oklahoma	2 p.m.
F17	@ Missouri	7 p.m.
F22	Colorado (Fox)	3 p.m.
F25	@ Texas Tech	7 p.m.
F28	Iowa State	7:05 p.m.
M3-7	Big 12 Tournament Kansas City, Mo.	TBA

OK,' " Jami said. "I just told her, 'Well, you're really not.'"

Nicole Kubik said she welcomes her sister's openness.

"It's so nice, because I know I can say anything to her and she can say anything to me," Nicole said. "It's just going to make us both better."

Nicole Kubik, the second-leading scorer in Nebraska high school girls' basketball history, made a smooth transition to the college game. Beck immediately inserted her into the starting lineup, and Kubik averaged 8.5 points, 2.8 rebounds and 2.5 assists.

Loop De Lue

Huskers off to rollercoaster start as hot-shooting Tyronn Lue leads Nebraska past previously undefeated Oklahoma State

The Nebraska men's basketball team wasn't exactly home for the holidays.

After winning the Ameritas Classic with victories against North Carolina-Wilmington and Grambling State during the first week in December, coach Danny Nee's Cornhuskers went on the road.

They lost at Creighton. Then they won at Minnesota, presumably a more difficult task.

They won their first game in the Outrigger Hotels Rainbow Classic in Honolulu, Hawaii, two days after Christmas, defeating Virginia. Then they lost to host Hawaii and Vanderbilt.

They opened Big 12 Conference play at Lawrence, Kan., losing to No. 2 Kansas in a game televised nationally on ESPN2. Then they played at Oklahoma State.

By the time they got to Stillwater, they were understandably travel weary, and they were losers of three consecutive games. Oklahoma State, in marked contrast, was 11-0.

The game was pivotal in the still-early season. And Nebraska responded.

Before a near-capacity crowd of 6,319 at Gallagher-Iba Arena, where they have had problems winning, the Cornhuskers rebounded from an 11-2 Oklahoma State start to win, 67-62.

"This is the first game we've played harder than the other team,"

Nebraska's Andy Markowski told the *Lincoln Journal Star* afterward. "I've never seen us on the floor as much as we were, stealing the ball, offensive rebounds, putbacks — we did all the little things to win."

"We made the plays down the stretch. Every game from here on out is going to be who makes the plays in the last three minutes, and we made them," the junior forward said.

That hadn't been the case during much of the Cornhuskers' holidays on the road.

Quite the contrary.

The four losses in the seven-game stretch away from home were all by 11 points or more.

Oklahoma State is the most improved team in the conference, according to Nee.

"You'll see," he said.

"You'll be talking about them in March."

The Cowboys, who were picked to finish seventh in the conference, were unranked

but among only five undefeated teams in Division I of the NCAA before Nebraska's visit. Oklahoma State had



Joe Waller

Junior forward Andy Markowski said the Huskers gave their best performance of the season against OSU, staying focused in the game's final minutes.

won 15 of the previous 21 games against the Cornhuskers, and eight of the previous nine at Stillwater.

Nebraska was picked to finish

MEN'S HOOPS



fourth in the Big 12 in a conference-area media preseason poll. Based on non-conference play, however, the Huskers could do better than that — or worse.

Except for the Kansas Jayhawks, who have lost Raef LaFrentz for a month and a half, the Big 12 didn't distinguish itself in the early season. KU clearly is the best. As for the rest, well . . .

The No. 2 spot in the conference's North Division, and quite possibly the No. 2 spot in the conference overall, is wide open. It will belong to a team that wins at home and holds its own on the road.

That team could be Nebraska, which plays four of its next six games after the Oklahoma State victory at the Devaney Sports Center — the sixth is against Kansas on Feb. 1.

The game, on a Sunday afternoon, will be televised by ABC.

Despite the 1-2 disappointment in Hawaii — the Cornhuskers had hoped to win twice — there was optimism regarding Nebraska's chances at Allen Fieldhouse.

The Cornhuskers had, after all, forced top-ranked Kansas into overtime in the storied building last season before losing, 82-77.

The Jayhawks were

T.J. Pugh. They were not, however, vulnerable. Nebraska's optimism quickly melted under a 17-9 Kansas run at the end of the first half.

The score was 49-37 at the intermission, and the Jayhawks never let up, winning, 96-76.

Four Cornhuskers did score in double-figures, a glimmer of something positive. Guard Tyronn Lue led with

18 points — the 31st consecutive game in which he scored in double figures. The junior All-America candidate increased his streak to 32 games, scoring a team-high 18 points at Oklahoma State.

Despite being the defensive focus of the opposition, Lue was averaging over 20 points per game going into Nebraska's first conference home game against Colorado.

He scored a career-high 36 points in the 80-65 victory against Virginia in the Rainbow Classic, hitting 12-of-19 field goal attempts and 11-of-12 from the free throw line.

He scored 24 of the points in the second half, for the fifth-highest single-game scoring total in Cornhusker history.

Lue scored 17 points and 19 points, respectively, against Hawaii and Vanderbilt to earn a place on the all-tournament team.

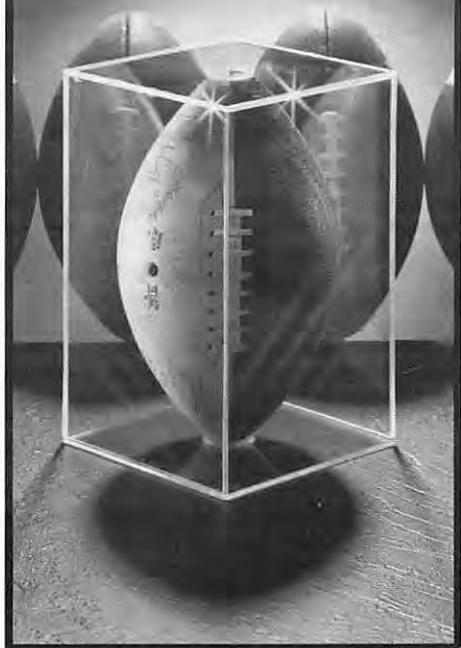
He also received Big 12 Player of the Week honors for his efforts.

It was the second time this season Lue was so honored. ■

1997-98 MEN'S HOOP SCHEDULE/RESULTS

Overall Record: 10-5 Conference Record: 1-1		
N5	Pella Windows (Exhib)	W, 83-63
N10	Marathon Oil (Exhib)	W, 87-72
N16	UNC Greensboro	W, 75-51
N19	Western Illinois	W, 86-57
N22	New Orleans	W, 81-66
N25	Colorado State	W, 64-57
N29	Texas-San Antonio	W, 68-59
D1	@ Tulsa	L, 68-85
D5-6	Ameritas Classic	
D5	vs. UNC Wilm.	W, 85-68
D6	vs. Grambling	W, 85-48
D10	@ Creighton	L, 73-84
D13	@ Minnesota	W, 70-66
D27-30	Outrigger Rainbow Classic Honolulu, Hawaii	
D27	vs. Virginia	W, 80-65
D29	vs. Hawaii	L, 62-87
D30	Vanderbilt	L, 69-80
J3	@ Kansas (ESPN)	L, 76-96
J7	@ Oklahoma State	W, 67-62
J11	Colorado	12:05 p.m.
J18	Oklahoma	12:05 p.m.
J21	@ Texas	8:05 p.m.
J24	Iowa State	12:45 p.m.
J28	@ Kansas State	7:05 p.m.
F1	Kansas (ABC)	2:35 p.m.
F4	@ Missouri	7:05 p.m.
F7	Kansas State	12:45 p.m.
F11	@ Texas A&M	7 p.m.
F14	Baylor	7:05 p.m.
F18	Missouri	7:05 p.m.
F21	@ Colorado	7 p.m.
F25	Texas Tech	7:05 p.m.
F28	@ Iowa State (ESPN)	6:30 p.m.
M5-8	Big 12 Tournament Kansas City, Mo.	TBA

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Sooner Bred, But Husker Red

Kicker, defensive tackle continue trend of top players leaving the state of Oklahoma to play ball in Lincoln

Under head coach Tom Osborne, the Nebraska Cornhuskers arguably have been the dominant team of this decade.

The Huskers' immediate future isn't in question, as they appear to have the talent to retain their spot among the annual candidates for the national championship.

The first real test in the post-Osborne era at Nebraska will come in recruiting, under new NU head coach Frank Solich. Osborne has said he'll stay around and help the Huskers through the Feb. 4 signing date.

Osborne already has called each recruit who has committed, and he has called many of those considering the Huskers as well to assure them that the Nebraska juggernaut won't change much with him gone and Solich in place. There are no plans to change the offensive and defensive schemes, and no assistant coaches or players have announced their intention to leave.

Osborne departs with his program on top and the talent cupboard full.

The first example came on the Huskers' first official weekend after Osborne's announcement. Since Osborne dropped the bombshell, the Huskers have picked up commitments from five outstanding players and still hope to land some of the top recruits in the country.

The first to commit to the Huskers after the Osborne news was running back **Shawn McGann** (6-foot, 187 pounds, 4.37 in the 40-yard dash) of Mishawaka (Penn), Ind., who earned Player of the Year honors in Indiana after a season in which he led his team to its third straight Class 5A title.

McGann is a "scatback" with tremendous speed who has the ability to make would-be tacklers miss. He

either will play tailback or slotback for the Huskers, after rushing for 1,614 yards and 31 touchdowns, catching 23 passes for 355 yards and a pair of scores and returning three kickoffs for touchdowns.

McGann said he also considered Notre Dame and Michigan State, but said that in the end, no program matched up with Nebraska.

"When I considered everything about the programs, there just wasn't any school out there that could put a better package on the field than Nebraska," McGann said. "I was a little concerned when Coach Osborne retired, but I have talked to

Defensive tackle Jason Lohr was one of two Oklahoma natives who jilted the Sooners by committing to Nebraska.



both Coach Osborne and Coach Solich, and they both assured me that Nebraska will be the same great program that it always has been. Nebraska is a great program for a running back, because they use a lot of them, and the running game is their

primary offensive focus."

The Huskers hosted a great group of athletes on the weekend of Dec. 19, and that weekend already has paid big dividends and put a big hurt on Big 12 rival Oklahoma. Defensive tackle **Jason Lohr** (6-2, 270, 4.9) of Jenks, Okla., kicker **Josh Brown** (6-1, 170, 4.6) of Foyil, Okla., and running back **Keyuo Craver** (6-0, 180, 4.4) of Harleton, Texas, all announced their commitments to the Huskers after their weekend visit.

Oral commitments are non-binding. Players can not sign national letters-of-intent until Feb. 4.

Lohr is rated by many as one of the top 10 players in Oklahoma and has earned All-America recognition following a season in which he helped Jenks win the Oklahoma Class 6A state championship and earn a final national ranking of No. 16 in the country. Lohr finished the season with 95 tackles (18 for losses) and four sacks.

Lohr said he never seriously considered staying in-state, initially leaning toward Michigan because of family ties. However, the Wolverines were slow to offer a scholarship, and Michigan's loss is the Huskers' gain.

"I have a lot of family that still lives in Michigan, and at the start of the recruiting process, I was hoping to go there," Lohr said. "However, Michigan showed a lot of interest, but I never heard them come through with a solid offer. When I went to Nebraska, they didn't hesitate in offering me a scholarship. Nebraska has a better program than Michigan anyway, and they were showing that they really wanted me. It was a no-brainer, and I didn't hesitate to take their offer."

Brown has said he has been leaning toward Nebraska since the summer. A multi-talented star of Foyil's eight-man team, Brown attended Nebraska's



by
**JAMES
HALE**

summer camp and almost committed then to play for the Huskers. Brown then went on to post 3,294 all-purpose yards as a tailback, receiver and kick returner, and he excelled as a defensive back. For his career, Brown finished with 9,179 all-purpose yards and 122 touchdowns.

However, it's as a kicker that Brown is ranked as one of the top five prospects in the country, after drilling 20 career field goals — three of which were over 50 yards — and averaging 41 yards per punt.

Oklahoma made a late run at Brown, and made up some ground after an early visit to Norman in December. Brown said Osborne's retirement also concerned him as he

Michael Warren



Osborne continues to influence the decisions of many recruits despite having stepped down as head coach.

headed to Nebraska, but once in Lincoln, it didn't take him long to realize that he wanted to be a Cornhusker.

"It took me about 10 minutes on campus," Brown said. "I knew in my heart that I really wanted to play for Nebraska, and once I talked to Coach Osborne a little bit, and then Coach Solich, I realized that nothing is going to change at Nebraska. I really like Coach (John) Blake at Oklahoma, and I appreciate their recruitment of me, but their program doesn't match up with Nebraska's right now. It's just such a great opportunity to play for the best program in the country."

Craver exploded on the recruiting scene with 3,024 rushing yards and 51 touchdowns to lead all Class 2A rushers. In his career, Craver rushed for over 6,000 yards, despite having missed most of his sophomore season.

After Craver visited Norman, he

COVETED CROP

As national signing day approaches (Feb. 4), the list of players each school pursues continues to change — almost daily.

The list changes in large part because players announce their commitments to other schools. When that happens, the snubbed schools need to determine whether to re-focus their recruiting attention, or whether there is a chance that the players can be swayed with continued recruiting.

For a variety of reasons, many players do not develop into the stars that some project them to be. Injuries, academic difficulty and strong competition for playing time can cause a player to come up short of often lofty expectations.

Nevertheless, fans of every school often play the "what if" game, speculating on which blue-chip recruits will help that team reach its goals in future seasons. Some of the players Nebraska covets:



The Huskers could continue their pillaging of Oklahoma if they can lure linebacker Rocky Calmus to Lincoln.

PLAYER	POS.	HT.	WT.	40	SCHOOLS
DeMoine Adams	LB	6-2	205	4.5	NEB, ARK
Chip Ambres	QB	6-0	175	4.4	NEB, OU, TEX, A&M, HOU, TULANE
Arnaz Battle	QB	6-3	197	4.46	Committed to ND
Rocky Calmus	LB	6-3	215	4.6	OU, OK ST., KAN, TULSA, NEB
Lute Cory	DT	6-2	290	5.2	NEB, OU, SMU, ARK
Tad Golden	FS	6-1	182	4.5	NEB, ND, MICH, TENN
Victor Ike	RB	5-11	185	4.3	Committed to A&M
Clifford Jefferson	CB	5-10	160	4.4	UCLA, ND, OU, MIA, NEB
Dennis Johnson	DE	6-7	256	4.7	KY, MIA, UNC, OU, NEB, FLA, ND
Anthony Kelly	LB	6-3	215	4.5	USC, MICH, NEB, OU, AZ ST.
James McGriff	CB	6-2	205	4.5	MICH, FLA, NEB
Marcus Mosley	LB	6-2	215	4.5	Committed to SMU
Mike Pearson	OL	6-7	270	4.9	MICH, OH ST., FLA, TENN, NEB
Brandon Pryor	LB	6-2	227	4.6	AZ ST., OU, ILL, WASH ST., A&M, AZ ST.
Tellis Redmon	RB	6-1	205	4.5	SMU, NEB, MINN, OU, A&M
Fred Rogers	LB	6-3	250	4.7	Committed to BAY
Frank Romero	DL	6-5	230	4.7	OU, NEB, TENN, OK ST., KSU, ND
Randy Stella	LB	6-1	195	4.5	NEB, COL, ND, FSU
Jonathan Wells	FB	6-2	223	4.5	NEB, SMU, ND, OH ST., TULANE
Troy West	LB	6-4	205	4.4	OU, NEB
Marcus Wilkins	LB	6-2	215	4.6	Committed to TEX
Mike Williams	OL/DL	6-5	320	5.2	TEX, OU, KSU, NEB, ND, BAY

NEBRASKA COMMITMENTS

John Bowling	TE	6-3	215	4.8	Lincoln (Southeast), Neb.
Josh Brown	PK	6-1	170	4.6	Foyil, Okla.
John Clayton	DL	6-2	270	4.7	Peoria (Centennial), Ariz.
Wes Cody	OL	6-3	265	5.0	Fremont (Burgan), Neb.
Keyuo Craver	IB	6-0	180	4.4	Harleton, Texas
Michael Demps	IB	6-0	195	4.3	Fort Worth (Dunbar), Texas
Dahrran Diedrick	IB	6-1	210	4.4	Scarborough, Canada
Aaron Golliday	TE	6-5	235	4.9	York, Neb.
DeAntae Grixby	DB	5-10	190	4.4	Omaha (Central), Neb.
DeJuan Groce	DB	5-10	180	4.4	Lakewood (St. Edward), Ohio
Chris Kelsay	DE	6-5	225	4.6	Auburn, Neb.
Nate Kolterman	OL	6-4	300	5.3	Seward, Neb.
Jason Lohr	DT	6-2	270	4.9	Jenks, Okla.
Shawn McGann	IB	6-1	190	4.5	Mishawaka (Penn), Ind.
Jeremy Slechta	DL	6-5	255	5.0	Papillion (LaVista), Neb.
Justin Smith	DE	6-4	230	4.9	Sherman, Texas
Frank Strong	IB	6-2	190	4.5	Stockton (Franklin), Calif.
Wilson Thomas	WR/DE	6-6	195	4.6	Omaha (North), Neb.

Osborne's Retirement Doesn't Cost Huskers Any Commitments

STICKING TO THEIR WORD

When **Tom Osborne** made his announcement that he was stepping down as Nebraska's football head coach after the 1998 Orange Bowl, 10 players already had announced their commitment to play for the Cornhuskers. The Huskers were planning an upcoming recruiting weekend during which many top players would visit Lincoln, and once again Nebraska appeared primed to land one of the top recruiting classes in the country. (Oral commitments are non-binding. Players can not sign a national letter-of-intent until Wed., Feb. 4.)

Most of those players who had given their verbal commitments were from Nebraska high schools, many of whom grew up always wanting to play for Nebraska and Osborne. For many of these athletes, all it took was a phone call from Osborne offering a scholarship, and their decision was made to head to Lincoln.

The announcement that Osborne would step down (and be replaced by his long-time running backs coach and assistant head coach Frank Solich) caught recruits by surprise, and left many questions unanswered. Were they angry that they wouldn't get a chance to play for Osborne? Were they sad, worried that the Husker program wouldn't be the same? Each player reacted to the news in his own way, but in general, they all said they wanted the best for Osborne and still wanted to be Huskers.

Running back **DeAntae Grixby** (5-foot-10, 190 pounds, 4.4 in the 40-yard dash) of Omaha (Central), Neb., was the first to commit to the Huskers during the summer, and he said he never anticipated the news.

"It was a shock, and I didn't want to believe it when I first heard the news," Grixby said. "Nebraska called my school to warn me, so that I wouldn't be totally caught off-guard. I thought that was very nice of them, because at least I had a little bit of a warning. When you think of Nebraska football, you think of Coach Osborne. He is Nebraska football. For just a couple of days, I thought of not going, then thought better of it. Coach Solich actually recruited me, and I know he will be a great head coach. With Coach Solich running the show, I think things will continue as they are, so I am not going anywhere."

Tight end **John Bowling** (6-3, 215, 4.8) of Lincoln (Southeast), Neb., said he always has thought highly of Nebraska, in large part because of the Huskers' legendary coach, but after talking with Osborne, he said he understands why he is stepping down.

"I was saddened, because I was looking forward to playing for him," Bowling said. "But with his health and things, it's best for him to step down and try to relax a little. Coach Solich will do a great job — I am confident of that. It did cross my mind that maybe I shouldn't go there without Coach Osborne there. However, after talking to Coach Osborne, he said things wouldn't change much, and I stopped thinking about leaving. I have absolutely no thoughts of not going to Nebraska."

Defensive end **Jeremy Slechta** (6-5, 255, 5.0) of Papillion (LaVista), Neb., said he was shocked when he first heard Osborne might step down. "I didn't know what to think when, a day before his announcement, a couple of newspapers called asking me about his possible retirement. I didn't want to believe it," Slechta said. "I still didn't want to believe it the next day at the press conference, but I understand why he did it. He called me after the press conference and said that he had been to the doctor twice, and that it was just time to get out. I was going to Nebraska no matter what. I am not worried about the future of Nebraska football. Coach Solich and the other established assistants will stick together and keep Nebraska football going in the right direction."

The Huskers had two somewhat shaky commitments at the time of Osborne's announcement. If any recruits were leery of still becoming a Husker after Osborne's decision, most would have thought it would be running backs **Dahrran Diedrick** (6-1, 210, 4.4) of Scarborough, Canada, and **Michael Demps** (6-0, 195, 4.3) of Fort Worth (Dunbar), Texas. Yet both insist they remain firmly committed to the Huskers.

"I certainly wasn't prepared for the decision Coach Osborne made, but I respect it and realize that Nebraska will still be a great program," Diedrick said. "After meeting Coach Osborne on my visit I realized why he was having so much success. He was genuine in his comments toward me, and I could tell he had a great deal of love and respect for his fellow coaches, players and the Nebraska football program. That's the kind of the guy I want to play for, and I feel Coach Solich has those same qualities." ■

was thought to be leaning heavily toward OU. Baylor and Arkansas were thought to be the Sooners' top competition — until he visited Lincoln.

"I just couldn't believe how great Nebraska was when I went up there," Craver said. "The great facilities, the stadium, all those All-Americans and the great coaching staff — that was just more than I expected. Everybody knows their program is the best in the country right now, and they love to run the football. They have told me I will play slotback for them, and the way they explained the position to me sounds like it fits my abilities perfectly. Nebraska just seemed like the perfect place for me, so I am committed, and recruiting is over."

The newest commitments came from wide receiver/defensive end **Wilson Thomas** (6-6, 195, 4.6) of Omaha (North), Neb., and Pine Bluff (Ark.) linebacker **DeMoine Adams** (6-2, 205, 4.5).

Thomas isn't listed on most national recruiting lists, but the Huskers had their own evaluation this summer, when Thomas scored the second-highest point total on the athletic performance test at the Huskers' summer camp, becoming only the second player ever to score over 2,000 points. NU running back Ahman Green was the first, and remains the only Husker ever to score higher than Thomas.

Thomas has the versatility to play a number of positions, although it is likely he either will remain a wide receiver or try to bulk up to play rush end. But he has the body and the athletic ability to play tight end, or perhaps some linebacker.

The Huskers didn't offer Thomas a scholarship until mid-December, but once they did, he turned down offers from Kansas State, Iowa State, Colorado State and New Mexico State.

Adams' commitment to Nebraska is not considered firm. After committing to the Huskers in early January, Adams turned around and said he still wanted to visit Arkansas.

What few observers have realized is that the Huskers actually have lost a few players. The limited number of scholarships means no team can sign every player it would like to. Therefore, there are a few players the Huskers want that they won't land.

Quarterback **Arnaz Battle** of Shreveport (Byrd), La., followed his heart and committed to his long-time



**A call from
Osborne cemented
Jeremy Slechta's
verbal commitment.**

favorite — Notre Dame — shortly after coming back from a visit to Nebraska. The Cornhuskers also lost a pair of All-America honorees to UCLA, linebacker **Robert Thomas** (6-3, 215, 4.6) of San Diego (Imperial), Calif., and offensive lineman **Mike Saffer** (6-6, 293, 5.2) of Tucson (Sabino), Ariz.

However, those are the only players the Huskers had targeted who have committed elsewhere. All-America offensive lineman **Mike Pearson** (6-7, 270, 4.9) of Seffner (Armwood), Fla., is scheduled to visit Lincoln in January. A high school All-America, Pearson already has visited Michigan and Ohio State, and said he still plans to visit Florida, Tennessee and Nebraska.

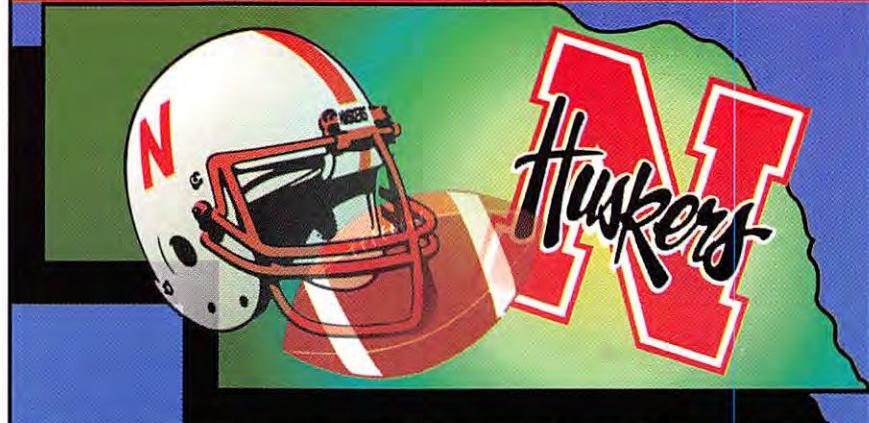
Free safety **Tad Golden** (6-1, 182, 4.5) of Decatur (Southwest DeKalb), Ga., has visited Notre Dame and Nebraska and still plans to visit Michigan and Tennessee. James McGriff (6-2, 205, 4.5) of Melbourne (Palm Beach), Fla., is an outstanding cornerback or slotback prospect who has visits set with Michigan, Florida and Nebraska.

All-America fullback **Jonathan Wells** (6-2, 223, 4.5) of River Ridge (Curtis), La., didn't make it to Lincoln for a scheduled visit in December, but will reschedule for January. Wells has the Huskers in competition with Ohio State, SMU, Notre Dame and Tulane. Nebraska also will have to rally to sign running back **Victor Ike** (5-11, 185, 4.3) of Austin (Bowie), Texas. Ike gave a verbal commitment to Texas A&M, but said he still plans to visit Nebraska and Texas. ■

Josh Brown has excelled as a tailback, receiver and defensive back in eight-man football, but will be a place-kicker at Nebraska.



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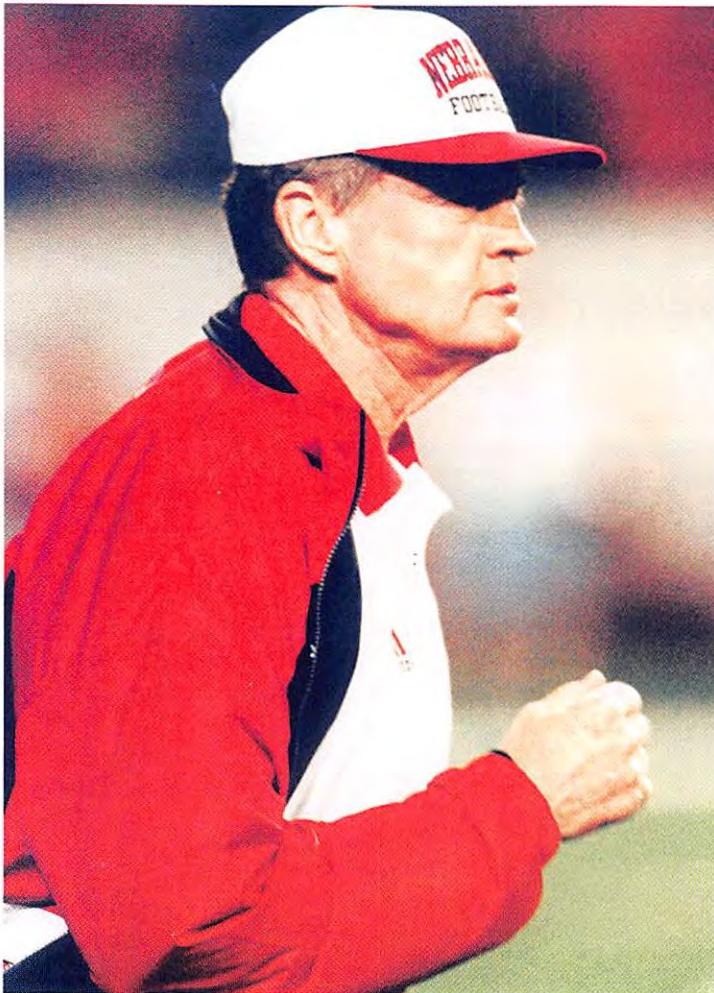


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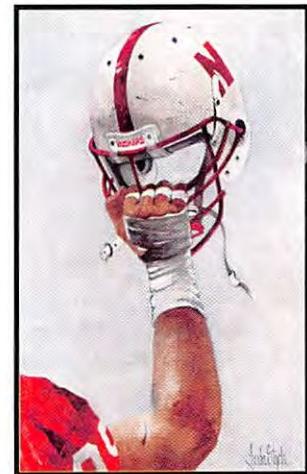
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Nebraska's Departing Class

Peter, Wistrom bid a fond farewell to Osborne, the class act of college football

With 58 seconds remaining in the Orange Bowl game, Grant Wistrom and Jason Peter dumped a cooler of water on Tom Osborne. The water was cold and caused Osborne to gasp.

It also helped mask what tears there might have been.

The drenching of a coach on the sideline near the end of a significant victory has become something of a cliche in football, at just about every level. It has become obligatory.

In this case, however, it was a genuine expression of affection.

And it was appropriate that Wistrom and Peter were responsible. The senior defensive co-captains represent the heart and soul of Osborne's third national championship team.

Osborne often alluded to that during his third perfect season in the last four.

"The fact that Jason Peter and Grant Wistrom came back, I think, probably put us over the hump, if not their athletic skills, their leadership," he said at a news conference on the morning after the game.

"Those two guys, among some others, ramrodded that football team. They decided a year ago they were going to come back and get the thing done. Their leadership was invaluable."

Wistrom's decision to return to Nebraska for his senior season instead of declaring for the National Football League draft was much-publicized, primarily because he likely would have been a first-round pick. But Peter could have opted to give up his final

season of collegiate eligibility as well.

Both had the physical ability, and more importantly the work ethic, to have played at the next level this season. That they returned was evidence of their joy in playing the game.

The money will come soon enough. And with it, some of the joy will be gone.

It also was appropriate that Wistrom and Peter performed the late-game, cooler-dumping, victory ritual because they, perhaps as much as any who have played for



by
**MIKE
BABCOCK**

If not for that aspect, Wistrom and Peter might not have come back.

"We wouldn't want to play for anyone who's so strict and tight-laced," Peter said during an interview after the game. "And Coach Osborne, especially over the past couple of years — since we started winning big games and the national championships — he's really loosened up. It's been great.

"I really think it's good for the team. Everyone feels comfortable around him."

Peter and Wistrom felt comfortable enough around Osborne to banter with him, as well as with each other, throughout the season. "He has a really dry sense of humor," said Wistrom, the Lombardi Award winner. "Honestly, you guys have seen it in press conferences, things like that. He's a very funny man. Lots of people wouldn't think that about him. But he's always ready with a good, quick comeback."

Wistrom and Peter have been media-friendly throughout their careers, and their relaxed manner seems to have drawn out Osborne's lighter side.

"People can't see him having a sense of humor or anything," Peter said. "But he's one of the funniest guys I know — just his one-liners that he throws in."

By his sophomore season, Peter said he was beginning to feel comfortable around Osborne. "I didn't really get nervous around him," Peter said. "My junior and senior years, you know . . .

"Coach Osborne and I have had a great relationship."

One of his most enduring images of Osborne, Peter said, involved his brother, Christian, and Rick



Wistrom and Peter gave Osborne the ceremonial victory dousing at the Orange Bowl.

Osborne during his 25 seasons as head coach, elicited and highlighted an aspect of his personality that many would argue didn't exist.

Schwieger, a former Cornhusker decathlete who works as a production specialist for HuskerVision and serves as the public address announcer at Memorial Stadium, among other things.

At the 1996 Fiesta Bowl game, Osborne and Christian Peter threw Schwieger in a swimming pool. A segment of a subsequent *Tom Osborne Show* included videotape of the practical joke.

The segment also "showed Coach Osborne's reaction," Jason Peter said.

"The way he was laughing, that made everybody feel so good, because you don't really think about Coach Osborne as someone really breaking down and just practically crying when he's laughing.

"That's one image that will always stand out in my mind."

Except for his immediate family and his assistant coaches, Osborne's players probably have had a better insight than anyone else into the difficult decision to step aside after 25 seasons. "I'm sure he'd like to coach for 10 more years," said Peter. "But there's a concern about his health, and also a concern about the program being left in the right hands. I think Coach Osborne wanted to make sure Coach Solich got the job. He's very deserving of it; he's been around the program for so long. I think that was a big part of it. Coach Osborne wanted to make sure when he left, everything would still be run the same.

"It's tough. A guy who has such a presence, you can't relate to that to a certain extent.

"Yet we all felt for him. We all knew what his feelings were and why he was doing it, which kind of made it tough because we knew he still wanted to coach."

Osborne enjoyed unprecedented success over his last five seasons, during which the Cornhuskers were 60-3, with three undefeated and untied records, and won three national championships.

The first national championship team in 1994 "was kind of held together by will and baling wire," Osborne said when asked to compare the three. "We had (Tommie) Frazier hurt and (Brook) Berringer with a collapsed lung. And Matt Turman, he wasn't totally healthy."

That team had a "tremendous attitude, cohesiveness and an improved defense."

The 1995 team was "very, very tal-

ented on both sides of the ball," said Osborne. It was "probably the most talented team I've ever coached, and the most controversial team I've ever coached."

Because of the controversy, 1995 was "maybe the most unpleasant year I've ever gone through, and yet at the same time, (it was) the most pleasant year, depending on which way you looked at it.

"This year's team was somewhere in between, probably a little more talented than '94, certainly not near as controversial as '95. That was nice," Osborne said. "So it was just kind of a nice way to go.

"Great leadership on the part of the players, and I didn't have to do much."

The 1997 team never let down Osborne, on or off the field. It represented him well.

"As far as I'm concerned, the man has done everything any type of coach could do," Peter said. "His moral standings are unbelievable. People try to model themselves after him. He's a guy where academics come first, before athletics. He's a guy who's always trying to do the right thing.

"I can't say enough about the man.

It's definitely sad . . ."

Wistrom agreed with Peter, his teammate and roommate.

"Any time you lose a great man like that . . . we're not losing him. He's not deceased or anything," Wistrom said. "But we are losing him to some extent. He's not going to be around for us a whole lot anymore. He's not going to be there to crack a joke when it needs to be cracked. It's a big loss."

Even though his collegiate eligibility was complete when he walked off the field at Pro Player Stadium after the Orange Bowl game, Wistrom spoke as if he were still a part of the program, which, of course, he always will be. Like it was for Osborne and Peter, however, the game was his last at Nebraska.

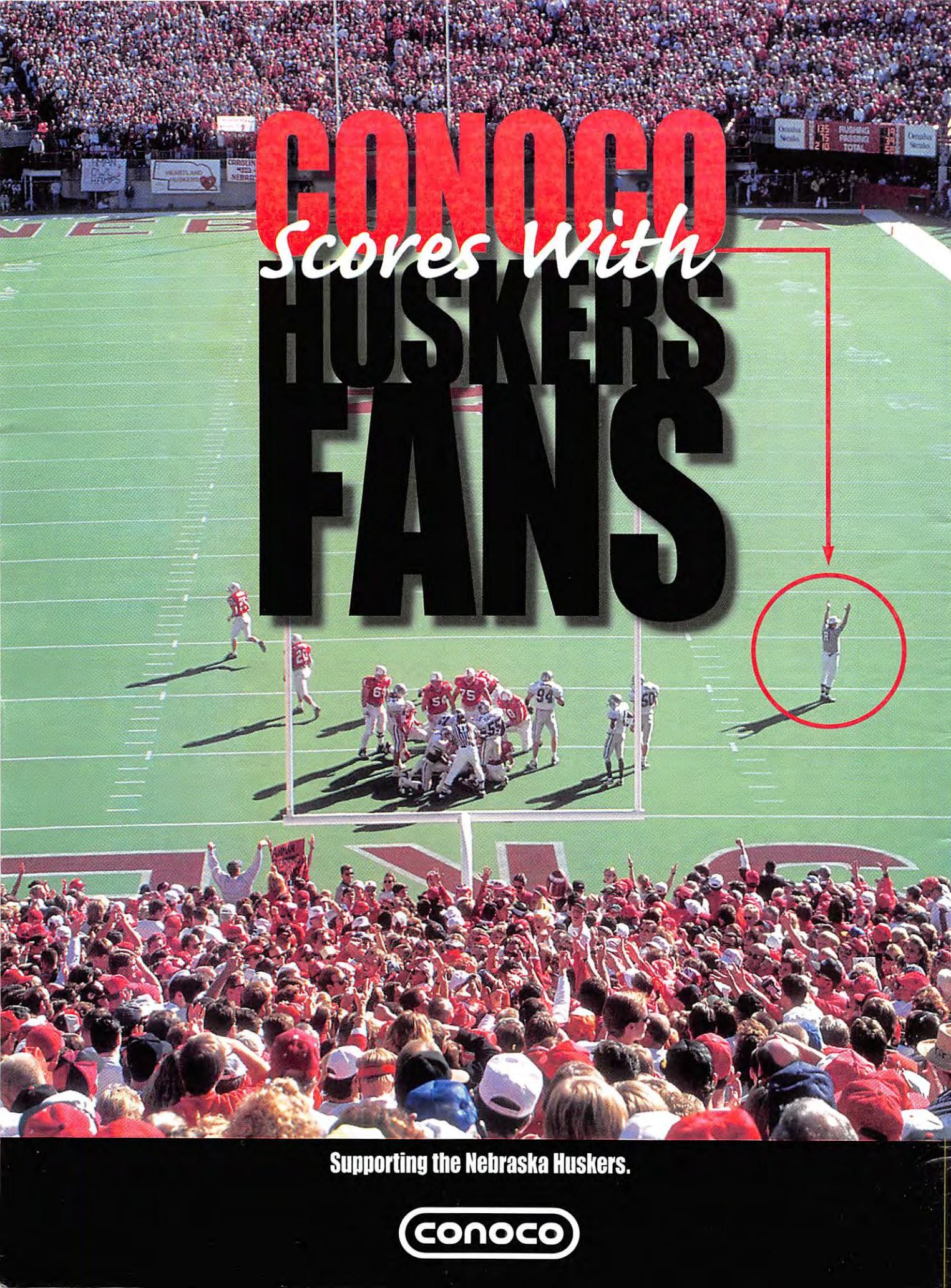
The three went out together. "I'm going to miss him," Peter said of Osborne.

"But I'm sure I'll have a relationship with him for the rest of my life. I'm really glad that I came here and that I got to develop a relationship like I did with Coach Osborne."

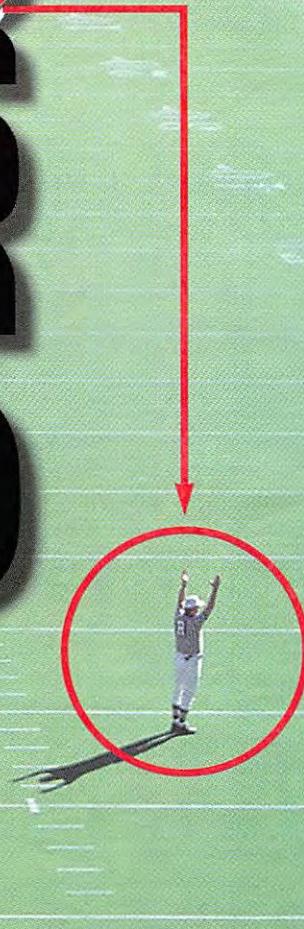
Peter expressed what nearly every Cornhusker over the past 25 years has felt. No coach could ask more than that from those who played for him. ■

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